

RADICAL REPUBLICANISM IN ENGLAND, AMERICA, AND THE IMPERIAL
ATLANTIC, 1624-1661

by

John Donoghue

B.A., Westminster College, New Wilmington, PA, 1993

M.A., University of Pittsburgh, 1999

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
the School of Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2006

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

This dissertation was presented

by

John Donoghue

It was defended on

December 2, 2005

and approved by

William Fusfield, Associate Professor, Department of Communication

Janelle Greenberg, Professor, Department of History

Jonathan Scott, Professor, Department of History

Dissertation Director: Marcus Rediker, Professor, Department of History

Copyright by John Donoghue
2006

RADICAL REPUBLICANISM IN ENGLAND, AMERICA, AND THE IMPERIAL ATLANTIC, 1624-1661

John Donoghue, Ph.D.

University of Pittsburgh, April 30, 2006

This dissertation links the radical politics of the English Revolution to the history of puritan New England. It argues that antinomians, by rejecting traditional concepts of social authority, created divisive political factions within the godly party while it waged war against King Charles I. At the same time in New England, antinomians organized a political movement that called for a democratic commonwealth to limit the power of ministers and magistrates in religious and civil affairs. When this program collapsed in Massachusetts, hundreds of colonists returned to an Old England engulfed by civil war. Joining English antinomians, they became lay preachers in London, New Model Army soldiers, and influential supporters of the republican Levellers.

This dissertation also connects the study of republican political thought to the labor history of the first British Empire. Although intellectual historians of the English Revolution often explore classical, renaissance and religious sources to explain political thinking, they regularly neglect the material contexts, in England and elsewhere, where political ideas took shape. The world of the university, the halls of Parliament, and the rank-and-file of the New Model Army inspired republicanism, but so too, dialectically, did the new worlds of colonial courts, plantations, and imperial armadas. As the English Revolution gave birth to the first British Empire, the circulation of experience between the old and new worlds transformed port cities like Boston, London, and Bridgetown into ideological entrepôts, where radical networks forged republican programs during a period of revolutionary upheaval. Confronting slavery, the destruction of Native American societies, and impressment for imperial wars in Ireland and the West Indies, radicals created a language of practical Christian liberty that defined the abolition of coerced labor as a principle of republican justice. Ultimately, the dissertation argues that labor history can illuminate the intellectual history of a trans-national political movement organized for, and often by, the working classes of the seventeenth-century imperial Atlantic.

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Chapter One</i>	
The Godly City: Coleman Street Ward and Puritan London, 1624-1634.....	27
<i>Chapter Two</i>	
“Combustions in the Commonwealth”: Liberty of Conscience in New England, 1630-1638.....	73
<i>Chapter Three</i>	
“The New Creature”: Radical Politics on the American Strand, 1638-1652.....	120
<i>Chapter Four</i>	
“Hell Broke Loose”: An Atlantic History of ‘England’s Troubles’, 1638-1649.....	163
<i>Chapter Five</i>	
“That Crimson Stream of Blood”: The English Empire in Ireland and the Caribbean, 1649-1655.....	226
<i>Chapter Six</i>	
“The Accursed Thing”: Empire, Unfree Labor, and the Politics of Practical Christianity, 1655-1657.....	299
<i>Chapter Seven</i>	
“Soldiers in the Army of the Lord”: Republican Revolution in London, 1657-1661.....	351
Conclusion.....	381
Bibliography.....	388

Acknowledgements

I cannot hope in the space available to properly acknowledge all of those who have made this dissertation possible; despite its flaws, this work is in part a monument to the support that I have received from a community of mentors, colleagues, friends, and family over the past decade.

I owe an enormous debt to my dissertation committee, William Fusfield, Janelle Greenberg, Jonathan Scott, and Marcus Rediker. Bill helped me understand the importance of political rhetoric in republicanism, and gave early and consistent support to my project. Janelle introduced me to the rich world of seventeenth century English intellectual history, advised me on shrewd approaches to revisionism in English historiography, and waged an uphill battle in helping to transform me into a competent writer. The countless hours she spent writing her extensive and always illuminating comments vastly improved both the content and style of the manuscript, and her high-spirits and good cheer helped sustain me when things grew dark. In a stroke of good luck, Jonathan Scott arrived at the University of Pittsburgh as I began to conceptualize this project. The reader will see me shamelessly borrowing from his path-breaking works on republican thought. Jonathan's careful readings of the various drafts, his perceptive commentary, and his insistence on concision, deep historiographic context, and thorough proof-reading were critical to my development as a scholar and have made this a much better work than it might otherwise have been. And finally, to my advisor, friend, and mentor Marcus Rediker, I owe the most of all. His patience and dedication as an advisor, his thoughtful mentorship, and his intellectual depth and wise counsel helped me chart a course through some very stormy seas, and for this I will always be grateful. But even more so, his marriage of scholarship and activism exemplify the highest form of academic integrity, and have been an inspiration to me as they have been to all of his students. I am proud to work with Marcus in the vital tradition of bottom-up, social history, one that he has helped to re-map and refine through the vehicle of Atlantic history.

I am grateful to several institutions that provided grants and fellowships to finance research trips to London, Oxford, and Boston. At the University of Pittsburgh, I would like to thank Professor Dennis Looney, interim director, Center for Western European Studies, and the Hays Summer Research Grant committee (2003) from the Department of History. I must also take this opportunity to thank Molly Estes and Grace Tomcho of the history department for their help in negotiating the university's bureaucratic labyrinths. The American Historical Association's Michael Kraus Research Grant helped cover travel expenses, and a Mary Catherine Mooney Fellowship allowed me to spend a very pleasant and productive month at the Boston Athenaeum, where the kindness and collegiality of Stephen Nonack, Curator of Manuscripts, and Stanley Cushing, Curator of Rare Books, was greatly appreciated. I also thank Michael Webb of the Bodleian Library

for assisting me in my initial foray into the manuscript collection of that wonderful archive.

For over a decade now, the International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World at Harvard University has provided young scholars with both funding and an exciting venue to discuss their own research. My time at the 2003 and 2005 seminars helped shape the dissertation in invaluable ways. Thanks go to Director Bernard Bailyn and Administrator Pat Denault for presiding over and organizing the annual conference.

I would also like to thank Billy Smith and Simon Middleton for convening the intellectually provocative Conference on Class and Class Struggles in North America and the Atlantic World (2003). In the crisp autumn air, under impossibly blue western skies, the conference's profound debates on class as a descriptive and analytical category compelled me to re-think my approach to labor history, and took the dissertation in new and fruitful directions.

I am especially grateful to the administrators, teachers, and students of Mt. Lebanon High School. The administration provided valuable funds and time off for research, and here I should pay particular thanks to Stephanie Ross of the conference committee, my supervisor, Steve Bullick, and senior high principal, Dr. Zeb Jansante. Karen Banks and Gina Stein helped me manage a spirit-crushing volume of paperwork. My friends in the Social Studies Department are not celebrated enough for their intellectual depth, professional skill, and bottomless devotion to their students: let me pay tribute here, for I am constantly humbled by them as teachers and as human beings. They have displayed inexhaustible patience with their distracted, disorganized, and forgetful colleague, whose preoccupation with this project has magnified his many professional shortcomings. The work ethic, enthusiasm, and intellectual curiosity of my American history and world cultures students continues to impress, and can be counted on to rejuvenate their teacher on even the dreariest of Mondays; also, their toleration of my romantic exegeses on all things Irish has not gone unrecognized.

This project owes much to the encouragement of an ever-expanding circle of friends. For decades now, I have relied on Joe O'Malley and Father Matthew McClain to keep my ego in check and the stories (and beer) flowing. At Mt. Lebanon High School, Patt McCloskey, Joe Figura, Chris Haering, Tom Jackson, Suzi Walters, Pete Dinardo, George Savarese, Dave Black, Dr. James M. Mooney, and Tina Raspanti have supplied support, advice, and good-humor. The camaraderie I enjoyed and perspective I gained from Scott Giltner and Craig Marin at the University of Pittsburgh helped make life as a grad student bearable. Mentors Barbara Kern, John Canning, and Mark and Mary Ann McCloskey have taught me more than they know, and more than I can adequately thank them for. Robert Sherry's wisdom gave me strength, and Drew and Jen Haberberger have provided unflagging encouragement and many warm and welcome occasions to celebrate our friendship. I thank them for introducing me to another mentor, Dr. Todd DePastino, a wonderful scholar whose professional guidance has been instrumental throughout my life as a graduate student. John and Trish McAdoo's hospitality, generosity, and many selfless kindnesses, especially during the long summer of 2003, have been sources of joy. Chris and Jen Hayward's charisma, enthusiasm, and loyal

friendship have been constants; their zeal for life reveals the diminishing returns that result from spending too much time in the study.

I have yet to attempt the daunting task of expressing gratitude to my family. They have helped me recognize that scholarship is as much a vocation as a profession, and contains ethical imperatives larger than academic subject matter. With open hearts, my in-laws, Ray and Fran Golli, chose to ignore my less than attractive prospects (a penniless graduate student who lived in a creaking garret), and have always treated me as a son. Their warmth and generosity are boundless, and I thank them for raising such a strong and beautiful woman. My many hilarious adventures with my brother-in-law Jon Golli in and out of the country came as welcome respites from long periods of work. My uncle and namesake, Father John Donoghue, showed me the nature of “radical love,” a truth that has become an unfolding epiphany in my life. To my aunt, Margaret Wickham, thank you for your prayers and encouragement. My brother Patrick has borne more than his share of academic posturing from his pseudo-intellectual brother. Without “defining his terms,” he has helped me discover new ways to write and think, and to paraphrase his favorite author Henry Thoreau, to advance confidently in the direction of my dreams. I have my sister Ann Haring to thank for introducing me to puritan studies, for lively conversations about the course of my research, and for her insights into the more transcendental aspects of my conclusions. She has also been a gracious hostess for my many research trips to Washington, DC; I look forward to enjoying more of these with her and her husband Paul. In regard to my parents, I scarcely know where to begin or how to end; suffice to say, their many sacrifices for family have been a model of selflessness, their faith always an anchor, their compassion an inspiration, and their humility empowering. Their love, encouragement, and support have sustained me always, and I hope that the wisdom distilled from this dissertation reflects the values they continue to instill in my siblings and I.

And finally, a special note of thanks to my wife and daughter. Meredith’s birth last winter rescued me from an abyss of fruitless agonizing over the final draft and gave me a compelling reason to declare the project complete. I look forward to putting her to sleep with bedtime readings of dissertation footnotes. My wife Laura has inspired me as a scholar and as a human being, and whatever progress I have made in either category, I owe completely to her. She has felt every ounce of the project’s stress, strain, and struggle as intensely as I have, and her patience and optimism helped me through many difficult periods when the work seemed to overtake both of our lives. Her claim of payback through a long and growing list of house repairs notwithstanding, I can only hope to give back all that she has given to me. Laura has long been my compass star; her love has been my guide in this work, as it has in everything, and for this I will always be grateful.

INTRODUCTION

On January 17, 1661, in a cold, crowded London courtroom, Thomas Venner was slowly bleeding to death. Despite the pain of his nineteen wounds and the jeers of Royal officials, the wine cooper faced his indictment without remorse. Venner's head remained unbowed as the court clerk announced his arraignment for treason.

Two weeks before, Venner had led a band of fifty men in open rebellion against the newly restored King Charles II. As one of the rebels explained to a friend, they had taken up arms "to pull Charles down, and settle a free state" so that an English Republic might once again rise on the ashes of monarchy.¹ Venner and his tiny militia, which included veterans of the New Model Army and Navy, seemed to appear everywhere in the city during that first week in January, "scattering" their revolutionary manifesto "about the streets," as the book seller George Thomason noted, while battling the trained bands and the King's Life Guard in hand-to-hand fighting.

The rebels spilled first blood at St. Paul's Cathedral as dusk descended on January 7, and then melted away to Ken Wood, only to reappear on Coleman Street two days later "like wild enthusiasts...besotted with hellish notions."² By the middle of that January morning, Venner's rebels had thrown London into a state of panic. Shop owners shuttered their windows, citizens gathered arms, and while the fighting raged not far from

¹ *A Relation or History of the Rise and Suppression of the Fifth Monarchy within the Kingdom of England, the Chief of which Sect was one Thomas Venner, a Wine Cooper* (London, 1661), n.p.

² Archdeacon Laurence Echard, *The History of England* (London, 1707), 104.

his home, Samuel Pepys wrote that gentlemen would only venture out into the streets armed with pistols and swords.³ By evening, a troop of Royalists led by Colonel Cox had put down the uprising, capturing Venner and over twenty of his men after killing the rest. When the smoke cleared on January 10, Pepys noted in his famous diary that the rebels had broken through the city gates twice, put the King's Lifeguard to flight, and repulsed repeated charges by the trained band. In light of this impressive display, Pepys estimated that the rebel force numbered at least five hundred. He was incredulous to learn that he had overestimated the size of Venner's militia tenfold. "A thing that never was heard of," wrote Pepys reflecting on the desperate fighting, "that so few men should dare and do so much mischief."⁴

Dragged into the Old Bailey on a bloody litter a week later, Venner delivered a remarkable account as to the reasons why he and his men had embarked upon their ill-fated venture. After lamenting the Restoration, Venner explained the course of his political education in a way that few readers today might expect. According to multiple witnesses, he began a "bottomless discourse" about how the "testimony of his twenty-two years in New England" had inspired his faith in the ideals of the English Revolution.⁵ As Venner's rebels proclaimed in a manifesto, the crusade of the saints "was much more

³ P.G. Rogers, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 114-115.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁵ "A Relation of the Arraignment and Trial of those who made the late Rebellious Insurrection in London, 1661," in Sir Walter Scott, ed., *A Collection of the Most Scarce and Valuable Tracts on the Most Interesting and Entertaining Subjects: but Chiefly as Such that Relate to the History and Constitution of these Kingdoms. Selected from an Infinite Number in Print and Manuscript, in the Royal, Cotton, Sion, and other Private, as Well as Public Libraries; Particularly that of the Late Lord Sommers* (London: 1809-1815), 4: 470. Cited hereafter as *Somers Tracts*.

than a national quarrel,” for they had brought true reformation out of America, “the Wilderness,” as a gift to England and the wider world.⁶

Chief Justice Foster, not one to be lectured by a “mean man of no note,” sentenced Venner to death. The next day Venner and his comrade, Roger Hodgkins, were dragged down Cheapside on a sledge to their meetinghouse in Coleman Street Ward. Described by a Royalist pamphleteer as “that old nest of sedition,” Venner and his men had hatched their conspiracy there, and it was on Coleman Street where the rebel chief met his grisly end.⁷

Three hundred and forty-four years after his speech from the dock, Venner’s allusion to New England leaves the modern reader wondering how life in America informed his attempt to revive the English Revolution in the streets of London. After all, two decades and the Atlantic Ocean separated these experiences in time and space. From our modern perspective, the New Jerusalem of New England was literally and figuratively a world apart from Restoration London. But while on trial for his life, Venner nonetheless felt compelled to connect his “New England testimony,” or the meaning of his accumulated experiences in America, to his insurgency against Charles II.

Venner’s New England reference confirmed the dim view long-entertained by Royalists about England’s godly colonies across the Atlantic. In one of the dozens of tracts written in the wake of the rebellion, a Stuart partisan wrote, “we’ll never deny [Venner’s] New England testimony, which has made Old England smart, having been the nursery and receptacle of sedition for too long.”⁸ In choosing these metaphors, the

⁶ *The Last Speech and Prayer, with Other Passages of Thomas Venner* (London, 1660), A2-6; Thomas Venner, *A Door of Hope* (London, 1661), 2-4.

⁷ Thomas Birch, ed., *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe* (London, 1742), 7: 184-187.

⁸ “A Relation,” *Somers Tracts*, 4: 470. Parentheses mine.

anonymous pamphleteer construed the region as both a forcing house and refuge for radical republicanism. The author felt no need to explain this symbology, confident that his contemporaries shared his assumptions about the American sources of the Good Old Cause.

Although contemporaries noted connections between the colonization of New England and the English Revolution, historians have largely neglected these links. In this dissertation, I will argue that our own confusion about Venner's New England testimony might be clarified by recapturing the seventeenth-century view of New England colonization and the English Revolution as interrelated, mutually dependent developments in a wider Atlantic history. Within the worldviews of revolutionaries and Royalists alike, geographic barriers and national boundaries seemed irrelevant when reflecting on the traumatic events of their time, which raises questions as to why scholars have used them so extensively as exclusive historiographical markers. If Venner's case is instructive, and I hope to show here that it is, de-emphasizing national boundaries to emphasize trans-national historical connections can reveal how tensions among the saints were forced into the open in New England after the Great Migration. This, I will argue, produced a radical challenge to constituted religious and political authority in America that would in turn shape the godly cause during the English Civil War and Interregnum. Moving beyond European boundaries allows us to recapture the Atlantic history of seventeenth-century republicanism, a long-neglected but nonetheless critical context in which this body of political thought developed.

That English saints pursued the Reformation beyond Europe and that their experience with colonization in New England impacted the godly movement back in

England seems to have escaped the attention of many historians of the English Civil War and Republic. Even where these connections between New and Old England have been obvious, as in Venner's case, or even with the more famous example of the Bay Colony governor and Parliamentary leader, Sir Henry Vane, the New England experience of pivotal figures in the English Revolution has been interpreted mostly as a curiosity, meriting at most a trivial footnote. I will contend that New England's early history was central to the revolution, particularly in how it informed the conflicts that arose among the saints as they defined their ideas concerning church reform and commonwealth government from 1640 to 1661.

To advance such an argument is to enter a historiography that often seems at war with itself, and nowhere is this clearer than in the controversy surrounding the term, "puritan."⁹ The questions posed about the term have ranged from what "puritans" believed to whether they were radical or reactionary. This debate has culminated in a dispute as to whether "puritan" can be used at all as a legitimate descriptive or analytical category. Scholars today echo the despair expressed by Thomas Fuller in his 1546 *Church History of Britain*, "I wish the word puritan were banished [from] common discourse, because so various in the acceptions thereof."¹⁰ Since "puritan" was mostly employed to insult a wide array of people who fell afoul of the English episcopacy, using

⁹ The historiographical debate concerning puritanism is voluminous. The following works provide helpful introductions: Peter Lake, "Defining Puritanism –Again?" in Francis Bremer, ed., *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Faith* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1993), 3-30; Patrick Collinson, *The Puritan Character: Polemics and Polarities* (Los Angeles, 1989); Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1958); J.C. Davis, "Puritanism and Revolution: Themes, Categories, Methods and Conclusions," *Historical Journal* 34 (1991), 479-490; John Morrill, "A Liberation Theology? Aspects of Puritanism in the English Revolution," in Laura Lunger Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 27-48; Dwight Brautigam, "Prelates and Politics: Uses of 'Puritan,' 1625-1640," in Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents*, 49-66.

¹⁰ Laura Lunger Knoppers, "Introduction," in Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents*, 13.

the word fairly and precisely now seems almost impossible.¹¹ In this dissertation, “godly” or “saint” will be called upon, since most so-called “puritans” described themselves as such. As will become exceedingly clear, more exact terminology will be necessary to differentiate among the disparate factions of the godly.

So what did the godly actually believe? First, their fierce condemnation of Roman Catholic doctrine, ritual, and church organization distinguished them from other English Protestants who also looked askance at Rome, but with less intensity. Leading scholars such as Caroline Hibbard and William Lamont have come to see anti-Catholicism as the definitive hallmark of “puritanism.”¹² In groups that ranged from the Presbyterians to the Quakers, the saints sought to divest the Church of England of its remaining “popish” vestiges; although other Protestants shared this concern, the godly pursued it with a determined iconoclasm that targeted communion rails, statues, crosses, and stained glass. These men and women placed primacy on scriptural reading, meditation, and preaching in a “plain style” that diminished distracting rhetorical and allegorical excess. The “plain style” divided godly clergy from other English clerics who rejected their turn towards Ramist oration and disputation.¹³

An apocalyptic enthusiasm infused this anti-Catholicism. Like many other Protestants, the godly believed that the Reformation had initiated the final war between the Protestant forces of Christ and the Roman Catholic forces of Anti-christ. In this vein,

¹¹ Dwight Brautigam, “Prelates and Politics: Uses of ‘Puritan,’ 1625-1640,” in Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents*, 49-66.

¹² William Lamont, “The Religious Origins of the English Civil War,” in Gordon Schochet, ed., with Patricia E. Tatspaugh and Carol Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War* (Washington, D.C.: The Folger Institute, 1985), 11; Caroline Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

¹³ Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (London, 1988); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Perry Miller, *The New England Mind in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939).

the saints hoped that the tribulations foretold in the Book of Revelation would usher in the defeat of back-sliding Protestants at home and Catholic enemies abroad. Although a wide variety of Protestants professed millennial beliefs, those who feared international Catholicism the most saw Christ clothed in Calvinistic garb, with Anti-christ draped in the episcopal robes of Rome.¹⁴ Opposing antichristian doctrine and practice became a millennial duty for the saints, and added a sense of urgency to their determination to further reform the English church. Venner and his cohort on both sides of the Atlantic were especially prone to this millenarianism, and were called Fifth Monarchists because of their conviction that the Protestant Reformation would initiate the “Fifth Monarchy,” or the thousand-year rule of Christ the King with his saints on earth.¹⁵ That their religious zeal would preserve them as a righteous remnant of true reformation during the tribulations of the end times became an article of faith. To prepare for the final judgment, the godly prayed for liberation from the inward bondage of sin; to make the way straight for the Lord, they prayed for their liberation from the outward bondage of religious persecution and the oppression of Anti-christ. But this came at the price of hysterical paranoia about the alleged menace of international Catholicism. A popish plot seemed to exist wherever church practice differed from their vision of godly religion, prompting J.C. Davis to write, “the handclasp of bigotry and liberty remains one of the enduring and

¹⁴ Nicholas Tyacke, *The Fortunes of English Puritanism, 1603-1640* (London: Dr. Williams’ Library, 1991); Bernard Capp, “The Political Dimension of Apocalyptic Thought,” in C.A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich, eds., *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents and Repercussions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 93-106; Malcolm Bull, ed., *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1995); James Holstun, *A Rational Millennium: Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth-Century England and America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

¹⁵ According to prophecies in the Daniel 7 and Revelation 20-21, this thousand-year reign, which the saints called the New Jerusalem, or Zion, marked the end of the cyclical rise and fall of the world’s four tyrannical empires. Apocalyptic deliverance signified the cosmic, stadial transition from the profane history of the Mede, Persian, Greek, and Roman empires to the “Fifth Monarchy” of sacred time, when Christ the King would rule with his saints on earth.

distinguishing images” of the godly’s struggle. But as we will see, many of the more radical figures among the godly overcame this hysteria and would embrace complete toleration as one of the first fruits of reform.¹⁶

Many of the godly were united in their spiritual journey through a strong attachment to Calvinistic tenets of election, as opposed to more works-based doctrines concerning salvation, although many radical saints who will appear in later chapters would conclude that Christ’s resurrection entailed universal salvation. Intense anxiety shaped the spiritual life of those who remained fixated on the question of election. On the other hand, saints called “antinomians” by their critics overcame this anxiety with a supreme confidence in their election that led them to reject church ordinances that other saints embraced as godly reforms.¹⁷

Conversely, all of the godly believed that the episcopal organization of the Church of England had corrupted the original purity of the “primitive church.” In imitation of the early Christians, later factions among the saints such as the Independents abandoned the idea of a national church hierarchy in favor of voluntary associations between congregations. Although certainly not all returning New Englanders were adamant about this, those who joined Venner were. In contrast, those who came to be called “Presbyterians” opted for a national church with a hierarchy based on elected members of a ruling synod.

¹⁶ J.C. Davis, “Religion and the Struggle for Religious Liberty in the English Revolution,” *Historical Journal* 35 (1992), 507-530. Also quoted in Morrill, “A Liberation Theology?” in Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents*, 31.

¹⁷ For the best work on the salvation anxieties of the godly, see John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). John Morrill, however, sees the godly more preoccupied with liberation than doom. See his, “A Liberation Theology?” 30.

Here arises another, more infamous mark of what made the godly distinctive, one that often took physical form. The bishops systematically persecuted those they called puritans, a derogatory term coined by English Protestants to describe, categorize, imprison, and sometimes physically mutilate their more zealously anti-Catholic religious opponents. In many cases, the godly could be identified by ill health from prison terms; others would be earless or tongue-less, the victims of episcopal crackdowns aimed at preserving doctrinal and ceremonial conformity. These victims ranged the spectrum from the Presbyterian William Prynne to the Leveller John Lilburne, who eventually converted to Quakerism during the Interregnum.¹⁸ English Protestants who felt merely uncomfortable about Romish legacies in the church did not risk persecution and torture, nor did they feel compelled to leave England to advance the Reformation elsewhere; in seventeenth-century England, only those who were called “puritans” did this to distance themselves from an allegedly corrupt English church and an increasingly persecutory hierarchy. The success of the Counter-Reformation on the Continent aggravated their fears that the English church, especially during the reign of Archbishop William Laud, was aiding and abetting the revival of Romish religion. From the vantage point of the godly, the New World offered both a haven from persecution and a blank template for saints to refashion a godly church in their own image.

A sense of impending, apocalyptic conflict produced a worldview riddled by anxiety but bolstered by an unshakeable confidence in the rectitude of their faith that enabled saints to make the bold choice to emigrate. Marian exiles fled to Holland in the mid-

¹⁸ William Lamont, *Marginal Prynne* (London: Routledge, 1963); Pauline Gregg, *Freeborn John: A Biography of John Lilburne* (London: Harap, 1961)

Sixteenth Century, while later generations supported settlements elsewhere on the Continent.¹⁹ During the seventeenth century, tens of thousands of saints established godly commonwealths in the New World. In the century's second decade, separatists under John Robinson founded churches in Rotterdam, Leyden, and Amsterdam. This experiment later inspired the 1620 establishment of the separatist colony at Plymouth in New England. During the next decade, with the rise of Laud and his Court of High Commission, the brethren of Venner's generation fled across the Atlantic to establish the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In all of these cases, migration for religious reasons differentiated saints from their less militant Protestant brethren.

In New England, as Perry Miller and Sacvan Bercovitch have famously argued, saints found that exile on the American strand offered unrivaled opportunities to forge a new commonwealth cleansed of the Old World's carnal corruptions, one that fulfilled a providentially-ordained role of apocalyptic redemption in the script of sacred time.²⁰ Outposts of the true Reformation around the Atlantic might provide examples to erring, Old World Protestants about how to advance the Kingdom of Christ on earth. The Bay Colony governor John Winthrop first outlined this vision when he wrote in 1630, with not a little arrogance, that the "eyes of the world" were upon the small band of migrating saints, whose "city on a hill," a phrase taken straight out of the Book of Revelation, would provide a model of progressive reformation for Europe's embattled Protestants.²¹ Importantly for the New England emigres, godly men of their own choosing would

¹⁹ Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

²⁰ Perry Miller, *The New England Mind in the Seventeenth Century*; Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1978).

²¹ For discussions of Puritan exile, see James F. Maclear, "New England and the Fifth Monarchy: The Quest for the Millennium in Early American Puritanism," *William and Mary Quarterly* 32 (1975), 223-260. Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*; Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2-32.

govern the colony in accordance with the liberties that the saints could expect as Protestants and freeborn Englishmen. The families who migrated to New England in the 1630s sought, in many respects, the same type of godly commonwealth for which their co-religionists would take-up arms for in 1642. It is important to note, however, that the desire for reform produced consensus on neither theology nor church organization. Exile in the New World, as we will see, would sharpen these differences among the saints.

But, as this dissertation will show, migration was not a one-way trip for the godly, nor was the fragmentation of the godly community a singularly American experience. First, conflicts in New England paralleled those that later erupted in Old England during the Civil War. Moreover, the saints who returned from America would play key parts in these disputes. Given the massive volume of “puritan” scholarship, it seems surprising that the shift in trans-Atlantic migration during the English Civil War, when most saints moved *from Boston to London*, has received scant attention. By taking note of this trend, Venner and other returned New Englanders emerge in a much less marginal light. One study estimated that New England lost over one sixth of its male population during this period due to reverse migration.²² This pattern continued through the Interregnum and only changed course with the Restoration, leaving us with the significant yet understudied fact that of the first generation of American saints, approximately one thousand men left England only to return. If one recognizes that migration represented a tactical, if not traditional option for the godly, then it can at least be argued that exile, and the attendant, circular trans-Atlantic mobility it generated were central to two centuries of their religious and political experience.

²² William Sachse, “The Migration of New Englanders to England 1640-1662,” *American Historical Review* 53 (1948), 251-278.

Most work dealing with the godly's political ascendancy has treated exile communities around the Atlantic world as side shows to the main event of the English Civil War. This study will emphasize trans-Atlantic mobility to raise new questions about how non-European sources shaped radical religion during the struggle.²³ As Laura Lunger Knoppers has recently written, an Atlantic scope should be central to studies of the godly because the relationship between their communities in Old and New England provided an "important crucible" in which discontent and alienation were recast into an impulse to reform.²⁴ Unfortunately, American historians have often explained the radical religion of figures like Thomas Venner as marginal or void of intellectual substance.²⁵ Excluding his work on Roger Williams, the brilliant Perry Miller generally dismissed heterodoxy in America, and his powerful intellectual histories of the "New England Way" left a long shadow on the work of his heirs, most noticeably Sacvan Bercovitch, whose influence in later years has been comparable to Miller's.²⁶ Drawing heavily from Miller's portrait of *The New England Mind in the Seventeenth Century*, Bercovitch wrote from the assumption that the saints arrived in America with a shared view about what constituted reformed religion and society.

Despite his inattention to godly radicals, Bercovitch has shown persuasively how the saints conceived that building a New Jerusalem in New England would offer a model of

²³ Unlike their British counterparts, American scholars have long noted the interrelationship between English and American "puritanism." This approach has been led most recently by Francis Bremer. See his *Puritanism: Trans-Atlantic Perspectives* (Boston: Northeastern Press, 1993); *Congregational Communion: Clerical Friendship in the Anglo-American Puritan Community, 1610-1692* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994) and "A Further Broadening of British History," *Historical Journal* 36 (1993), 205-210.

²⁴ Knoppers, "Introduction," in Knoppers, ed, *Puritanism and its Discontents*, 11.

²⁵ Perry Miller, *The New England Mind in the Seventeenth Century; Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1956).

²⁶ David Harlan, "A People Blinded from Birth: American History According to Sacvan Bercovitch," *Journal of American History* 78 (1991), 949-971.

progressive development for the temporal world. This faith in New England's providential and historical destiny, Bercovitch argues, shaped the wedding of the sacred and temporal within the godly community that provided the seedbed of American culture's exceptionalist self-image. This came to define what Americans perceived as their national mission: building a model civilization that advanced justice and liberty to unprecedented heights. While I will build upon Bercovitch's work by examining the exceptionalist strains of American "puritanism," I will also depart from it by exploring a collection of New England saints who challenged what Bercovitch interpreted as the uncontested "proto-capitalist" cultural consensus of early America. Additionally, Bercovitch argued persuasively that New England's first generation believed that their experiment in reformed religion would foster a new age of human liberty. I would like to extend this aspect of his argument back across the Atlantic to England, where returned New Englanders swept up in the English Revolution drew upon their rarified American experiences to define the Good Old Cause of godly reformation and liberty.²⁷

Departing from the Miller and Bercovitch paradigm, other American scholars have written extensively about the currents of radical belief, organization, and action that marked New England's godly community.²⁸ Much of this work concluded that in contrast with England, an indomitable "puritan" orthodoxy subsumed heterodox aberrations.²⁹ Other historians emphasized the protean resilience of radical belief,

²⁷ Miller, *The New England Mind; Errand into the Wilderness*; Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad; The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New York, 1975); *The Rites of Assent* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

²⁸ For an early example, see Emery Battis, *Saints and Sectaries: Anne Hutchinson and the Antinomian Controversy in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962).

²⁹ Larzer Ziff, *Puritanism in America: New Culture in a New World* (New York: Viking, 1973); Derek Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston: A Portrait of a Puritan Town* (New York: Norton, 1965).

placing it at the center of religious experience in New England.³⁰ This body of work contends that the heterodox sects, which ranged from Anne Hutchinson's "spiritists" to the Quakers and Baptists, posed difficult challenges to constituted civil and ecclesiastical authority, making the development of godly orthodoxy in New England a contested process. What eventually became defined as "blasphemy," according to these authors, might have become "orthodoxy" given the popular sympathy for lay preaching and toleration. Stephen Foster, Louise Breen, Andrew Delbanco, Philip Gura, David Lovejoy, Janice Knight, Carla Pestana, and Michael Winship have all written about how radical strains within the godly community competed with rather than deviated from what Miller recognized as American "puritan" orthodoxy. This new research marked a revolutionary break with Miller's erudite attempt to construct an archetypal seventeenth-century "New England Way."³¹ A consensus of sorts has emerged over the last two decades that New England's earliest years provided an American stage for the explosion

³⁰ Following in the footsteps of Perry Miller, most American historians have seen the Great Migration as the final stage of English puritanism's influence on its American sister. For a notable exception, see Stephen Foster's *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). Foster sees puritanism as an Atlantic phenomenon, with Old and New England locked in a cycle of reciprocal development.

³¹ For instance, see Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument* (1991); "The Godly in Transit: New England and the Challenge of Heresy, 1630-1660: The Puritan Crisis in Trans-Atlantic Perspective," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38 (1981), 624-660; Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents* (2003); Louise Breen, *Transgressing the Bounds: Subversive Enterprises Among the Puritan Elite in Massachusetts, 1630-1692* (London: Oxford University Press, 2001); Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Phillip Gura, *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1984); David Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World: From Heresy to Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); Carla Gardina Pestana, *Quakers and Baptists in Colonial New England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Karen Orhdahl Kupperman, *Providence Island, The Other Puritan Colony, 1630-1641* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For additional work on the seventeenth-century Anglo-American world, see the following articles in the "AHR Forum: The New British History in Atlantic Perspective," *American Historical Review* 104 (1999), 426-500: David Armitage, "Greater Britain: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?" Eliga Gould, "A Virtual Nation: Greater Britain and the Imperial Legacy of the American Revolution," Ned Landsman, "Nation, Migration, and the Province in the First British Empire: Scotland and the Americas, 1600-1800," Jane Ohlmeyer, "Seventeenth-Century Ireland and the New British and Atlantic Histories;" J.G.A. Pocock, "The New British History in Atlantic Perspective: An Antipodean Commentary;" Barbara Dailey, "Root and Branch: New England Religious Radicals and Their Trans-Atlantic Community, 1600-1660," (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1984).

of the internal contradictions that divided the godly in England. Here, sectarian thought became part of rather than a casualty in the evolution of what Bercovitch has called the “puritan origins of the American self.” Though much of Miller and Bercovitch’s work deservedly influences scholars to this day, their critics have established credible reasons to emphasize the divisiveness of religious ideas rather than their potential to create social conformity in early America.

While having made invaluable contributions to puritan studies, this new school has rendered the relationship between Old and New England in largely (although not exclusively) linear terms, focusing on how English conditions shaped the religious life of New England’s first generation.³² This may be attributed in part to the fact that these historians were working with an exceptionally original topic, although they did manage to build some preliminary bridges back-across the Atlantic through chapters that explored New England and the English Civil War. Philip Gura’s work in particular stands out in this regard, especially in his analysis of the tracts Presbyterian heresiographers directed at New England congregationalism after the Antinomian Controversy, a pamphlet war that he rightly portrays as an important factor in the debate between Independents and Presbyterians during the Westminster Assembly (1643-1647). But when these scholars did view New England’s relationship to the godly’s troubles in Old England, they concentrated, in often brilliant fashion, on questions of theology and religious expression, leaving the field open for other historians to examine how larger historical processes,

³² The work of Allison Games has most significantly challenged this linear model by tracing the circular mobility of puritan migrants between colonies in the Caribbean and New England, as well as the phenomenon of reverse migration to Old England. See her *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). Unfortunately, Carla Gardina Pestana’s important new book, *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004) came to press too late to use extensively in this dissertation.

such as the growth of the Atlantic economy, colonial conquest, and England's post-Revolutionary imperial expansion informed both the religious *and* political dimensions of radical thought and action in New and Old England.

By following the course that Gura, Lovejoy, and other historians first charted back across the sea, this dissertation raises a series of questions about the politics of the radical godly in Old and New England. First, how can the "radical" godly be identified? Defined simply, godly radicals stressed lay authority and preaching in churches, were confident in their salvation through a conviction in the free grace God bestowed upon believers, fiercely disputed points of doctrine with other saints, despised episcopacy, opposed established churches, and professed an abiding faith in religious toleration that led them to oppose the power of civil authority in religious affairs. Using this definition as a foundation, the dissertation poses several questions about the radicals, their relationships with other saints, their religious and political beliefs and activities, and the trans-Atlantic context in which their political networks and ideas took shape. How can we best describe the godly community's religious and political opposition to the Stuart Dynasty in England before the Great Migration? How do we account for the vastly different forms this opposition took? These questions raise others about the fragmentation of the community of saints in New England. How did conflicts over religious doctrine, just systems of political and economic organization, relations with Native Americans, and the issue of slavery result in new visions among the radicals concerning the "coming reformation" and the "outward bondage" that obstructed its progress? Next, how, and to what extent did this radical vision shaped by American experience influence the struggle for religious reform and political liberty in Old

England? Who were the most notable men and women who fled England to build a New Jerusalem in New England, only to return during the English Civil War? How did colonial conquest in New England, capitalistic innovations and unfree labor in the Atlantic world, and Britain's first attempt at imperial expansion in the Caribbean inform radical concepts of political virtue, justice, and rights?³³ How did these trans-Atlantic religious radicals come to embrace republican political beliefs? How did their understanding of empire compare and contrast with other English republicans? Why did many former New Englanders become intransigent critics of English republicanism? How does the increasing interconnectedness of the Atlantic world during the mid-Seventeenth Century help explain this? In the end these questions may be subsumed by a larger one: what can we discover by seeing American exile, and its understudied corollary, reverse migration, not as marginal distractions, but as central factors in the English Revolution and the rise of the first British Empire?

By transcending a landed, linear model of development, this sea-borne circular conceptualization of Atlantic history might provide a new way forward for work on previously understudied sources of republican politicization and attitudes toward empire. The figures central to this dissertation were dissidents who came into conflict with other saints in both New and Old England over questions concerning just commonwealth government and the true course of the Protestant Reformation. These conflicts emerged as the godly seized upon the singular opportunities for change offered by colonization in the New World and revolution in the Old. I will argue that these conflicts, refined in the

³³ Karen Ordahl Kupperman has shown how English colonization efforts in the Caribbean played a large part in political controversies surrounding Cromwell's attempted conquest of Hispaniola during the Interregnum. See her "'Errand into the Indies': Puritan Colonization from Providence Island through the Western Design," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 44 (1988), 70-99.

crucible of mass migration, colonial conquest, civil war, state-building, and imperial expansion, produced a radical republican political culture. Mobility, of course, helps explain the trans-national character of this political tradition. But the historical processes that shaped it - the Protestant Reformation, the increasingly capitalistic organization of the Atlantic economy, and the rise of the first British Empire -were trans-national as well. Thus, the vision of godly reformation entertained by the radicals, like their own life experiences, grew beyond the confines of the nation-state. In Britain, Ireland, the Caribbean, and North America, radicals would confront the “outward bondage” of Anti-christ in religious forms that ranged from the “popish” episcopacy to “puritan” ministers, and in political forms that varied from usurping magistrates in New England to mercenary armies in Ireland. Anti-christ took economic forms as well, from enclosing landlords and slave trading merchants, to gaol keepers, ship captains, and press gangs. The point is that encounters with these “antichristian yokes” took place in a maritime world where saints formed radical republican networks as they moved around the Continent, the British Isles, New England, the Caribbean, and on the Atlantic Ocean itself.

The Atlantic history of republicanism has figured centrally in the scholarship of early modern political thought, although in some ways it proves just as elusive as “puritanism” to conceptualize. The American and French Revolutions gave “republicanism” its modern meaning, that is representative government without kings. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, this understanding was far from universal, although Machiavelli, deemed subversive by most Englishmen at the time, defined it as such. Translators rendered Thomas Smith’s 1583 *De Republica Anglorum*

as *The Commonwealth of England*, where *Republica*, from the Latin *res publica*, meant government for the public good. Englishmen called this a commonwealth, where upholding the interests of the nation provided the maxim for the just exercise of the king's authority. Commonwealth government in this sense could mean absolute monarchy if the king put the welfare of the public before the private interests of his court. Englishmen in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century usually made no distinction between monarchical and commonwealth governments. They understood "commonwealth" to mean a political system where kings exercised their divine prerogatives in accord with the public good, and in consultation with the nation's aristocracy (the House of Lords), and the democracy (the people's representatives in the House of Commons).³⁴ As Edmund Dudley wrote in *The Tree of Commonwealth* (1510), this system relied upon the king to provide justice, the nobles to safeguard truth, and the commons to supply concord and pacific order. With each of the three parts functioning according to this providential design, liberty, order, and virtue would flourish in the state. Although a monarch's powers did not derive from the people's consent, commonwealth philosophers held that the sovereign not deviate from the rule of law in exercising their privileges.³⁵ A monarch that did so became a tyrant. However, if the aristocracy or the democracy usurped the monarch's divine right to make policy, a different form of tyranny called anarchy would result.³⁶ Commonwealths, or "republics"

³⁴ David Wootton, "The Republican Tradition: From Commonwealth to Common Sense," in David Wootton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society, 1649-1776* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 2-6; John Morrill, "Rhetoric and Action: Charles I, Tyranny, and the English Revolution," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 93.

³⁵ Raymond Lurie, "Some Ideas of Commonwealth in Early Modern England," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 298-299; Quentin Skinner, *Renaissance Virtues: Volume II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 213-245.

³⁶ Richard Cust, "Charles I and Popularity," in Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust, and Peter Lake, eds., *Politics, Religion, and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain: Essays in Honor of Conrad Russell* (Cambridge:

in this sense, looked towards preserving England's ancient constitution from dangerous innovations rather than pursuing positive change for the public good.

We will see that over the course of the English Civil War, factions among the godly came to understand commonwealth government in dramatically different terms. For reasons that will become clear later, republicans during this age accepted, even embraced innovation in the form of the commonwealth principles outlined by the likes of Cicero, Sallust, and Machiavelli. Here, the Greek and Roman republics provided new ideological templates where the active participation of citizens in the governance of the nation created the civic virtue that preserved the public good from corruption and the power of the state from paralyzing impotence. While history proved that monarchs were naturally disposed toward corruption and tyranny, a virtuous citizenry reduced them to irrelevancy.³⁷

For the past three decades the field of republican scholarship has been dominated by a concentration on its theoretical "languages." Led by John Pocock and Quentin Skinner, historians of the "Cambridge School" have mined a rich quarry of compelling "intellectual contexts" by uncovering, layer-by-layer, the classical and Renaissance political language that shaped seventeenth-century political thought.³⁸ Exploring a canon

Cambridge University Press, 2002), 238-241; Derek Hirst, *England in Conflict, 1603-1660: Kingdom, Community, Commonwealth* (London: Arnold, 1999), 6-26.

³⁷ Blair Worden, "Marchamont Nedham and the Beginnings of English Republicanism," in Wootton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society*, 45-47; J.G.A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 143-147.

³⁸ For Pocock, see *The Ancient Constitution*, cited above, as well as *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); *The Political Works of James Harrington* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977). For Skinner, see *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978); *Liberty Before Liberalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); *Visions of Politics, vols. I-III*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002);

of political philosophy dominated by James Harrington, Marchmont Nedham, and John Milton, these historians have placed the classical and humanist language of republicanism within the Protestant, “apocalyptic” context of the seventeenth century. In so doing, they have explained the evolution of republicanism in the Old and New Worlds by comparing how philosophers tried to reconcile theoretical problems with the dilemmas faced by the emerging English nation-state. Here, concepts of civic virtue, the balanced distribution and protection of private property, a thriving commercial system, and the Machiavellian emphasis on military service for imperial expansion provided the intellectual food that sustained republican thought during the seventeenth century.³⁹

Other scholars have explored what the Cambridge school, to oversimplify, largely considers outside the realm of “intellectual history.” Work over the past fifty years from Christopher Hill, Brian Manning, and Bernard Capp has focused on the contributions the sects, the Levellers, and the New Model Army made to radical religious ideas and politics. More than any other scholar, the prolific Christopher Hill first helped students of the period appreciate the multiplication of political consciousness made possible by the crisis of the English Civil War. His most famous work, *The World Turned Upside Down*, still stands as a classic exposition of the rich diversity of radical thought and practice

Also helpful is Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Among the many edited collections of scholarly articles on republican intellectual history, see Martin Van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie, eds., *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

³⁹ David Armitage, David Wootton, and Blair Worden have mined particular aspects of republicanism's religious sources. See David Armitage, “The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Language of Empire,” *Historical Journal* 35 (1992), 531-555; David Wootton, “Introduction,” *Divine Right and Democracy: An Anthology of Political Writing in Stuart England* (New York: Penguin, 1986), 21-86; Blair Worden, “Oliver Cromwell and the Sin of Achan,” in Derek Beales and Geoffrey Best, eds., *History, Society and the Churches* (London, 1985).

during the seventeenth century.⁴⁰ Hill rescued his subjects from the “lunatic fringe” of the revolution to reveal the cultural alternatives sectarian religion presented to the Protestant work ethic and the exclusion of men of no property from the Civil War political settlement.⁴¹ Manning’s attention to the divisive class relationships within the godly party enhanced our understanding of the development and ultimate failure of Parliamentarians to retain a unified political front at the end of the Civil War.⁴² Bernard Capp enriched our knowledge of how millennial ideas inspired both the religious fervor and grass-roots political organization of the sects, especially the Fifth Monarchists, who emerged as Cromwell’s best-organized and most vocal critics.⁴³ Capp’s subsequent work on the war-time mobilization and politics of the New Model Navy delved into an understudied dimension of the period, and represents one of the most original contributions to English Revolution scholarship.⁴⁴ In the work of all of these historians, experiences ranging from radical “puritansim,” economic dislocation, and Civil War combat provided the foundation for new forms of solidarity institutionalized through the voluntaristic organization of gathered churches and the politicization of the New Model Army and Navy.

⁴⁰ Philip Gura credits Hill for inspiring his study of radical Puritanism in New England. See his *Glimpse of Zion’s Glory*, vii-viii.

⁴¹ A selection of Hill’s better known books includes *The World Turned Upside Down* (New York: Viking, 1972); *Century of Revolution, 1603-1714* (New York, 1982); *The Experience of Defeat* (New York, 1984); *Collected Essays* (New York, 1985); *Antichrist in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1990); *The English Bible and the Seventeenth Century Revolution* (New York, 1993).

⁴² Brian Manning, *English People and the English Revolution* (London: Heineman, 1976); *1649: The Crisis of the English Revolution* (Chicago: Bookmarks, 1992); *Aristocrats, Plebeians and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (London: Pluto Press, 1996).

⁴³ Bernard Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Millenarianism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972).

⁴⁴ Bernard Capp, *Cromwell’s Navy: The Fleet and the English Revolution, 1648-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

Departing from most work done on the Revolution, Jonathan Scott contextualized English religious and political radicalism within a deeper, European history rooted in a continuum of Protestant thought stretching back to the early days of the Continental Reformation. Beyond the European context, Scott highlights another aspect of the revolution often overlooked by historians, that radicals envisioned the realization of practical Christianity as the fruit of their struggle against the King, which formed only one front in the European-wide war Protestants waged with the forces of the Counter-Reformation. Practical Christianity thus emerges in his work as a critical component conditioning seventeenth-century conceptions of republican justice.⁴⁵ Scott also brings sectarian republicans into dialogue with their better-known secular contemporaries. Although Christopher Hill had attempted this several times over his long career, Scott makes this a central feature of his work.⁴⁶

Like Scott, James Holstun seeks to restore the same intellectual weight to the radical tradition, but in contrast with Scott and in continuity with Hill, he accomplishes this by reinvigorating the class-based analysis of the English Revolution. In *Ehud's Dagger*, Holstun explains sectarian republican ideology and organization through the lived experiences of soldiers, "mechanick preachers," wage laborers, and indentured servants, detailing how they organized political parties, mutinies, assassinations, and revolutionary uprisings against both the Royalist and godly ruling-class. Holstun's materialist analysis provides a substantial counterweight to post-modern philosophers and historians who have discounted class as a legitimate category of historical analysis. The

⁴⁵ Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Unfortunately, the publication of Scott's *Commonwealth Principles: Republican Writing of the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) came too late to make extensive use of in this dissertation.

⁴⁶ For instance, see Hill's chapters on Milton and Harrington in *The Experience of Defeat*.

class-consciousness of the sectarian revolutionary program emerges in this work as the product of religious belief, resistance to emerging capitalistic economic practices, war-time solidarity, and the labor history of military cooperation. According to Holstun, these combined to produce a republican alternative that opposed both the Rump Parliament's Civil War settlement and the Interregnum regime of the Cromwellian Protectorate.⁴⁷

Drawing on the earlier work of Hill, Manning, and Capp, and the more recent contributions of Holstun and Scott, this dissertation will explore how radical conceptions of republican justice, based on the tenets of practical Christianity, developed in competition with the acquisitive spirit of early capitalism, as well as the secular ideals of republican virtue and national greatness embodied in Machiavellian theory and implemented through the imperial designs of the English Republic. While each author has shaped this dissertation in profound ways, I depart from them all by moving my analysis beyond Britain and Europe and into the wider Atlantic world.

Work has already begun in this direction, particularly by Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker. Their *Many-Headed Hydra* places the political tradition of the English Revolution in a trans-Atlantic history of class conflict that reveals how developing capitalistic relations in and beyond England informed radical conceptions of both tyranny and liberty. This is an exceptionally original work that moves the “world turned upside down” conceptualized by Christopher Hill beyond the British Isles and into an Atlantic world that the new English empire, born from revolution, would come to dominate over the course of the next two centuries. In this dissertation, I argue that the sectarian practical Christianity described by Scott shaped the ideological substance of a trans-

⁴⁷ Holstun, *Ehud's Dagger*, 192-257.

Atlantic, republican program that defined itself against various forms of oppression precipitated by colonization and the imperialist expansion of the English Commonwealth.⁴⁸

Historians of the English Revolution are quite familiar with the history that unfolded in the chambers of the Council of State, the halls of Parliament, the battlefields of the English Civil War, and the meetinghouses of the London sects. They are less familiar with the world of the colonial settlement, the ledgers of Atlantic merchants, the holds of slave ships, the brutal work discipline of the cash crop plantation, and the mercenary ranks of imperial armadas. This dissertation attempts to bridge the gap. It will examine how the republic's mobilization of unfree military, naval, and plantation labor made its imperial expansion across the Atlantic world possible. This was the route taken by the commonwealth's ruling-class to achieve the classical glory that republican philosophers heralded as both necessary and proper for all great polities. Conversely, the political corruption, economic exploitation, and brutal oppression that imperial expansion called forth in order to mobilize military and naval labor dialectically informed a new radical republican consciousness that culminated in the rebellion described at the outset of this introduction. But the experiences shaping Cromwell's radical opposition accumulated well beyond Britain and Ireland, as the chains of the outward bondage that radicals condemned stretched across and around the Atlantic world. This dissertation will examine how New Englanders would bring their own encounters with outward bondage in America to bear on their views of the Protectorate's deployment of unfree labor for its foreign conquests. It is hoped that this trans-national context will suggest a

⁴⁸ Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).

way forward for labor historians and historians of political thought to conceptualize how radicals from around the Atlantic world understood the relationship between the political and economic interests of the republican ruling-class and the imperial expansion of the English Republic.

To explore this trans-Atlantic circulation of political ideas, organization, and action, this dissertation will follow the careers of several American saints who returned to Old England during the 1640s and 1650s. I will argue that these exiles established a political network that flourished in Old and New England during the mid-Seventeenth Century. The most radical members of this network eventually coalesced in that “old nest of sedition,” London’s Coleman Street Ward, where Venner and his followers conspired against Charles II. Historians have long noted the contributions that the members of this network separately made to the founding of the Bay Colony, the Antinomian Controversy in New England, the Parliamentary agitation against Charles I, and the opposition to Cromwell during the Interregnum, but they have left unstudied both the political network that these individuals formed and the nexus of the American and English experiences that gave rise to the network’s radical republican politics. Putting the radicals of Coleman Street in this international context enables us to recover what has been lost to us in the present, the impact that New England’s radicals had on the formation of radical republican principles of justice, and how this shaped attitudes toward empire among the godly of the Atlantic world.

CHAPTER ONE

THE GODLY CITY: COLEMAN STREET WARD AND PURITAN LONDON, 1624-1634

At *The Nag's Head* tavern, as in any public house worthy of the name, a few rounds of ale could transform quiet men into silver-tongued orators, lecturing their fellows with the kind of grandiloquence that could only be drawn from a well of empty pint glasses. But the spirit moving Samuel How, the man at the bar with the booming voice, was not John Barleycorn's. How had come to preach, not to drink, and judging by the large crowd at his elbow, he had learned his trade well. As How railed on, the congregation soon outgrew the dark, smoky confines of the pub and spilled outside into the noise and bustle of Coleman Street. To add to the strangeness of the scene, no soutane, surplice, or stole separated this divine from his congregation; the preacher and his assembly shared the worsted-wool clothing of London's working poor. This minister did not pretend to be above or even different from the people, for as a cobbler, he was truly one of them. He did not come to *The Nag's Head* on this day in 1638 to admonish the plebian assembly for their alleged wickedness. Instead, he had chosen this place to exalt the poor where they lived, and to condemn those who claimed moral and temporal authority over them.

Coleman Street Ward contained some of London's worst slums, but the street itself was a very fashionable address for the City's merchant elite, and How's presence alongside the grimy crowd made the few gentlemen at *The Nag's Head* very nervous. The torrent of scorn that he unleashed for the rich and powerful did not relieve their anxiety. "With all the power and might that God assisted me with," How thundered, he

would “utterly cast down, grind to powder, and... blow...away with the Word of God” their self-righteousness and pretended authority. “All the things of God,” the cobbler proclaimed, “both for matter and manner flow from the wisdom of God’s spirit, and not what man’s wisdom teacheth.” To both the preacher and his followers, interpreting the gospel did not require “human learning” or clerical sanction. That was the religion of the devil, who “would have the wise, the rich, the noble” and “the learned” over “the poor” so that they would “be beholden to them.” To embrace this “detestable filth, dross and dung” was “directly to oppose Jesus Christ” and so “good for nothing.”¹

From his tavern pulpit, How aimed his barbs at the rich, wealthy, and powerful of both the episcopal and godly factions of the English church. He took time in his speech to single out the five ministers in the audience who had earned “puritan” reputations, a group that included John Goodwin, the pastor of Coleman Street’s St. Stephen’s parish. How warned them that “excellency of speech, and swelling of one man’s wisdom” paled in comparison to the “demonstration of the spirit” in the “weak and contemptible.” The godly poor, as How’s sermon revealed, were developing their own critique of the ancien regime. “Religion,” wrote the poet John Taylor, “is now become the common discourse and table talk in every tavern and ale-house.”² Although Taylor was certainly exaggerating, the discussions held by these earthy assemblies challenged the prevailing view among their wealthier brethren that a reformation of the church did not entail a fundamental redistribution of power in English society. Taylor might have overplayed the plebian descriptions he gave of the audience in order to make the impact of How’s sermon seem even more subversive. But it seems likely that *The Nag’s Head*

¹ Samuel How, *The Sufficiencie of the Spirits Teaching Without Human Learning* (London, 1644), 3-D.

² John Taylor, *Religions Enemies, with a Brief and Ingenious Relation* (London, 1641), 6.

congregation did contain, as Taylor wrote, “barbers, mealmen, brewers, bakers, religious sow-gelders...button makers, coopers and cobblers, tinkers and peddlers, weavers and chimney sweepers.” We know this from How’s own occupation, that of a cobbler, and from the occupations of those from his conventicle who appeared before London magistrates and diocesan courts. The working poor who listened to How would have known that many of their wealthier neighbors and alleged social betters thought of them as poxed, plague-ridden trash, and their religion as hell-born heresy.³ Notwithstanding, the ragged crowd at *The Nag’s Head* entertained other notions about their persons and beliefs. In joining with How, they were claiming spiritual dignity and temporal authority for themselves through a radical spiritism. Moreover, religious beliefs like the ones held by this motley assemblage would, over the course of the next two decades, help transform the history of both New and Old England.⁴

Although How inspired his own audience (his sermon was reprinted six times over the next forty years), contemporary chroniclers often took a decidedly hostile view of Coleman Street’s religious enthusiasts. An anonymous writer in 1661 characterized the ward’s godly congregants as “Hell born monsters...bred up in the Devil’s Academy.”⁵ In 1648, John Vicars described with venomous relish the “notorious heresies” and “falsely pretended piety” of Coleman Street. He conflated John Goodwin with Samuel How, calling Goodwin “the schismatick’s cheater in chief,” and accused

³ How, *Suffencie of the Spirit’s Teaching*, 1; John Taylor, *A Swarme of Sectaries and Schismatiques* (London, 1641), 10.

⁴ Peter Clark discusses godly fears about the threat that public houses posed to the social order in his article, “The Alehouse and the Alternative Society,” in Donald Pennington and Keith Thomas, eds., *Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays in Seventeenth-Century History Presented to Christopher Hill* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 47-72. For a literary history of alehouse preaching, see Kristen Poole, *Radical Reformation from Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 16-44.

⁵ *Hell Broke Loose, or an Answer to the Late and Bloody Rebellious Declaration of the Phanatiques* (London, 1661), n.p.

him of deluding his “soul murdered proselytes” with “flashy rhetorical phrases” and “blasphemous errors.”⁶ Thomas Edwards, perhaps the most famous heresiographer of the period, noted that the ward’s “Great sectaries...vented their...very erroneous, strange doctrines” to mixed-class throngs who met in the meaner dwellings of the ward’s alleys and side-streets. Their radical doctrines, according to Edwards, worked like “gangrene” on the body politic of England, infecting the people with sectarian heresies that burst forth in the foul sores of subversion and sedition.⁷ Although this threat to clerically-defined godliness, property, and civil order might not have been as pervasive as Edwards and others claimed, the beliefs and social composition of the Coleman Street Ward sects did present an alternative strain of religious thought and organization that encouraged the poor to challenge not only bishops, popish doctrine, and Roman ritual, but the authority of godly ministers as well, particularly their self-proclaimed monopoly on defining what constituted the substance of religious reformation. We do not have to take the hostile accounts of Edwards and his colleagues as our main evidence for this. Lay preachers like Samuel How could speak for themselves.

Modern historians have described Coleman Street as a seedbed of “puritanism” during the seventeenth century, as its denizens included godly divines and merchants who became leaders in the pre-Civil War opposition to Charles I.⁸ The class differences that existed among the Coleman Street godly, however, have received less attention. I will argue that these can be explored with profit to understand the saints’ growing hostility to

⁶ John Vicars, *Coleman Street Conclave Visited* (London, 1648), 1.

⁷ Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 283-284.

⁸ Dorothy Ann Williams, “London Puritanism: The Parish of St. Stephen Coleman Street,” *Church Quarterly Review* (1959), 468; D.A. Kirby, “The Radicals of St. Stephen’s, Coleman Street,” *The Guildhall Miscellany* (London, 1971); Tai Liu, *Puritan London: A Study of Religion and Society in the City Parishes* (Newark: The University of Delaware Press, 1986); Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution: City Government and National Politics, 1625-43* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

Charles I. But by looking more closely at the social history of Coleman Street Ward, as well as the religion and parliamentary politics practiced there, I also hope to provide a case study in the fissures that plagued the so-called puritan party before the outbreak of the Civil War. In the end, such an approach will help illuminate events that occurred in the ward that proved to be true turning points in the history of the English Revolution.

For the purposes of this chapter, it is important to recognize that heresiographers rightly foresaw the danger of politicizing the neighborhood's poor with religious radicalism, although during the Civil War, Thomas Edwards observed another cause for concern emanating from Coleman Street. The ward had become a refuge of sorts for religious radicals from across the Atlantic world. "A noted sectary, lately come of New England, Holland, etc...who is in any way capable," wrote Edwards, could look forward on Coleman Street to "an office, place, gift or respect."⁹ This did not seem strange or unusual to Edwards, who knew that the ward's saints had played leading parts in chartering and settling the Massachusetts Bay Colony. But while clear to contemporaries, the larger significance of Coleman Street's Atlantic history has seemed to elude modern historians. In keeping with Edwards' insight, this chapter will trace how the parish churches and sectarian conventicles of Coleman Street Ward earned their notorious reputation for political and religious radicalism well before the outbreak of civil war. And as I will contend, the conflicted politics of reform that religious and class differences produced within the ward were at least as important as the godly's solidarity against the Stuart regime. In the next chapter, we will see how these conflicts over the

⁹ Gura, *Sions Glory*, 287; Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana: or A Catalogue and Discovery of many of the Errors...of this Time, Part III* (London, 1646), 241.

proper course, character, and purpose of the Reformation would be transported, with many of the ward's residents, across the Atlantic to New England.

Situated inside the old Roman walls, Coleman Street Ward was one of the thirty civil precincts within the "square mile" of the City of London. Large in comparison to its neighbors, the ward contained two parishes, the principle being St. Stephen's, whose 1400 communicants made it one of London's four largest congregations in 1631.¹⁰ Two major thoroughfares intersected the ward: Coleman and Lothbury Streets.¹¹ "A faire and large street, on both sides builded with diverse faire houses" noted one chronicler of Coleman Street, although earlier in the Middle Ages the neighborhood had earned a notorious reputation as one of London's worst red light districts.¹² But over time the ward's lot improved and by the reign of Charles I, several of London's most prominent merchants and guild leaders made their homes there. All counted themselves among the "godly" faction of the English church. Among them were Owen Roe, silk merchant, Isaac Pennington, Master of the Fishmonger Company and brewer, Mark Hildesly, Master of the Vintner Company.¹³ Others included Theophilus Eaton and the wealthy Sir Richard Saltonstall. Roe, Pennington, Hildesly, Eaton, and Saltonstall also served on London's Common Council, which elected the court of aldermen. The Common Council also elected members to the House of Commons, and many of the merchants listed above held

¹⁰ Williams, "London Puritanism," 468; Kirby, "Radicals of St. Stephen's," 98. Coleman Street Ward's other parishes were St. Olave's, Jewry, and St. Margaret's, Lothbury.

¹¹ James Thornley, *The Wards of the City of London* (London: The Architect, 1919). Moorgate Street, which parallels Coleman Street today, was a nineteenth-century addition. See Edwin Freshfield, *Some Remarks upon the Book of Records and History of the Parish of Coleman Street, in the City of London* (Westminster: Nicholas and Sons, 1887), A.

¹² Elizabeth Macbeath Calder, *The New Haven Colony* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934).

¹³ Liu, *Puritan London*, 194; Pearl, *Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution*, 194, 285.

seats before, during, and after the English Civil War.¹⁴ Ward aldermen Pennington, and Roe, along with their Coleman Street neighbors Samuel Eastwick and William Spurstowe, served in the Long Parliament, while residents Sir Thomas Wroth and Mark Hildesly sat in the Rump and Barebones Parliaments.¹⁵

The fact that these powerful men chose Coleman Street as their place of residence was no accident. The neighborhood lay at the geographic heart of London's institutions of political and economic power. At the bottom of Coleman Street loomed the magnificent, medieval Guildhall, the seat of the Lord Mayor, the Common Council, and the Court of Aldermen. The Royal Exchange, where transactions from across England's burgeoning commercial empire took place, bordered the ward. Other, more informal, yet perhaps equally important public spaces, such as *The Star*, *The Nag's Head*, and *The Windmill* taverns became signal meeting-places for political intrigue.¹⁶ London's elite found Coleman Street's elegant town houses comfortable, and its central location convenient for access to the both the city and nation's most vital political and economic institutions.

Despite its commercial and political prominence, Coleman Street Ward counted more than guild leaders and parliamentarians among its residents. Like most other neighborhoods in London at the time, the ward's residents hailed from diverse class and occupational groupings that lived and worked closely together.¹⁷ Alongside Coleman

¹⁴ Liu, *Puritan London*, 194; Pearl, *Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution*, 143, 324.

¹⁵ Kirby, "Radicals of St. Stephen's," 101, 105, 109; Pearl, *Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution*, 110-113, 139, 178.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 114. For instance, Oliver Cromwell and Hugh Peter allegedly decided at *The Star* that only the execution of King Charles could decisively end the English Civil War.

¹⁷ Jeremy Boulton, "The Poor Among the Rich: Paupers and the Parish in the West End, 1600-1724," in Paul Griffiths and Mark Jenner, eds., *Londonopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 197-225; Ronald Jutte, *Poverty and*

Street's rich merchants lived some of the city's poorest inhabitants. A nineteenth-century historian noted that St. Stephen's was "a crowded parish, inhabited principally by the poor."¹⁸ Most of the ward's streets traversed Coleman in a series of long, narrow, crooked byways, each of which contained a warren of courtyards and lanes. The most important of these were Swann Alley, Bell Alley, and White Alley. One account related that Swann and Bell Alleys were "so narrow that a horse and cart could not pass through," and indeed, the novelist Daniel Defoe, who lived in the ward during the Great Plague of 1665, noted how difficult the crowded warren of back-streets made the collection of the dead.

The parish was, and is still remarkable particularly, above all the parishes in London, for a great number of alleys and thoroughfares, very long, into which no carts could come, and where they were obliged to go and fetch the Bodies a very long way.¹⁹

The narrowness of the lanes, coupled with the lack of open space within the Square Mile forced Londoners to build up when they added on, and often three and four stories were piled atop the original timber-framed, daub-and-wattle dwellings, with each addition jutting several feet farther into the street, making for dim light and darkness even at mid-day.

Although crowded and dismal conditions like these existed across London, contemporaries like Defoe and subsequent historians have noted the exceptionally intense, if not unrivalled congestion and poverty in Coleman Street Ward. David Kirby's

Deviance in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 54-59; Daniel Defoe, *The History of the Great Plague in London, in the Year 1665* (London, 1754), 102. Defoe's brother lived in a house with a courtyard off of Swann Alley where he kept a large warehouse with goods "for exportation" in the Atlantic trade. Defoe watched over his brother's property during the Great Plague of 1665.

¹⁸ Freshfield, *History of the Parish of Coleman Street*, A.

¹⁹ Ibid., A; Defoe, *History of the Great Plague*, 105.

research on seventeenth-century London poll taxes revealed that at the outset of the Civil War, the ward contained 278 houses, 102 of which were multi-family tenements built between 1603-37.²⁰ Unlike the merchants and master artisans inhabiting the broad length of Coleman Street itself, the poor who lived in these cramped enclaves consisted mostly of “craftsmen, unskilled laborers, and paupers.”²¹ St. Stephens’ voluminous churchwarden records reveal widespread poverty within the ward, as “page upon page in the account book is taken up with entries of payments to visited poor families.”²² Conditions like these bred a disturbing lack of order on Coleman Street, with its “long and narrow and densely populated [lanes] on either side of its central thoroughfare, that became notorious for its lawlessness.” Felonies, mostly robberies of large amounts of money, plate, and clothes, along with petty theft, drunkenness, and assault were common crimes committed within the ward. The parish’s “lack of constables” exacerbated this lawless state, which “disturbed the neighboring parishes of St. Olave, Jewry and St. Margaret, Lothbury.”²³ When law enforcement officials did venture into the dark passageways, they took their lives into their own hands, as one unfortunate constable experienced when several residents “blow’d up a watchman with gunpowder, and burnt

²⁰ Kirby, “Radicals of St. Stephen’s,” 98.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 99.

²² Freshfield, *History of the Parish of Coleman Street*, 17. See Guildhall Library Ms 4457 vol 2.3 for St. Stephen’s Church Warden Accounts.

²³ Pearl, *Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution*, 183. Also see the Journal of Common Council, 40, fol.45v. For a basic acquaintance with the type of crimes that plagued the neighborhood, consult the Corporation of London Record Office (CLRO), Gaol Delivery Sessions. These manuscripts contain records of prisoners from across London that were delivered to Newgate for preliminary hearings. Crimes of greater magnitude like treason and felonies were heard in the Old Bailey’s court of Oyer and Terminer. The manuscripts of the Sessions Files contain detailed indictments, and infrequently, detailed depositions. The London Metropolitan Archive holds other records of criminal proceedings for the entirety of Middlesex County.

the poor fellow dreadfully” when he came he came to serve an order from the local justice of the peace.²⁴

Coleman Street Ward’s reputation for crime paled in comparison to its notoriety as a center of disaffection toward Charles I. J.E.C. Hill once described the ward as “the Faubourg-St. Antoine of the English Revolution.”²⁵ From the merchant prince to the poor pauper, a large number of the ward’s residents had been alienated by the King’s “Forced Loans,” which he had levied without consulting Parliament. Since Charles’ Scottish father James I assumed the throne in 1603, Stuart kings had sought complete control of the power of the purse, which countered the English tradition that the monarch should consult Parliament on matters of taxation. Unlike French or Spanish monarchs, English kings could not levy permanent national taxes, nor did they have an efficient bureaucratic apparatus to collect the taxes passed by Parliament. Increasing crown revenue formed a critical step down the path to modern state-building, one that European states had been traveling since the early sixteenth century. England, however, lagged behind its continental rivals, a weakness that forced Charles into taxation policies that became politically controversial.²⁶ Charles regarded the Petition of Right, Parliament’s response to the Forced Loans, as an affront to his royal power. Despite the political

²⁴ Defoe, *History of the Great Plague*, 64.

²⁵ Quoted in Pearl, *Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution*, 183.

²⁶ For discussions of the financial woes of the Stuart kings and the political disputes they produced, see the following: Ann Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1991), 13-32; Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 9-23, 105-130; Conrad Russell, *Unrevolutionary England, 1603-1642* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1990), 121-178. This collection of Russell’s influential ‘revisionist’ essays argues that the disputes between Charles and Parliament were void of ideological differences.

unrest, Royal justices upheld the king's prerogative power in the Five Knights Case, and Parliament proved unwilling to force a decisive showdown later in 1629.²⁷

After Charles dissolved Parliament in 1629, he would not convene another for eleven years. He hoped that increasing revenue through subsequent royal levies and forced loans would help him raise the powerful armies and navies necessary to face down England's Catholic rivals, France and Spain. Charles' critics regarded his attempts to raise revenue in this way as financially damaging, injurious to the commonwealth, and while technically lawful, not necessarily the actions of a king who placed the public good over and above the interests of his own court.²⁸ Whatever Charles raised in revenue through this maneuvering, he lost more in terms of the affection of his subjects, many of whom doubted that his policies served the Kingdom's best interest. Opposition to Charles' schemes attracted public attention, particularly MP John Hampden's trial for opposing the collection of "ship money" (1637). On Coleman Street, Hampden received a great deal of public support for his stance, as did Sir John Eliot, who spent time in prison with Hampden for opposing Charles' tax policies, which only increased the animosity of already disaffected subjects. Even those who would eventually side with the King, such as Sir John Culpeper and Sir John Strangeways, looked askance at the seemingly arbitrary direction Charles' governing policies had taken.²⁹ But during the 1630s, critics of the King's policies were not necessarily advocates of a "mixed-

²⁷ Glenn Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution: An Introduction to English Political Thought* (Hong Kong: Macmillan, 1991), 201-203; Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 156; see 149-160 for Russell's view on the debates concerning the king's constitutional powers regarding taxation.

²⁸ Richard Cust, "Charles I and Popularity," in Cogswell, Cust, and Lake, eds, *Politics, Religion, and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain*, 235-258; Glenn Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution*, 203-211.

²⁹ Conrad Russell, *Causes of the English Civil War*, 156-160;

monarchy” version of the ancient constitution, where a powerful Parliament would hold Royal policies firmly in check. In fact, most agreed that kings, as a part of Parliament, possessed considerable lawmaking powers. Charles’ critics at this time thought he had performed this role incompetently and without regard to the welfare of his subjects.

As the historiographical duel between revisionists and post-revisionists suggests, little consensus exists among Stuart historians, given the contemporary understanding of the King’s powers under the ancient constitution, whether ideologically polarized “absolutist” and “constitutionalist” factions developed in Parliament before the calling of the Long Parliament in 1640. Revisionists, led by Conrad Russell, have argued that Charles’ policies did not create a constitutional crisis, and that moreover, no ideological divisions existed between the Stuart Court and its critics during the 1620s and 1630s.³⁰ Charles may indeed have been acting within his power as sovereign in raising revenue without consulting Parliament and in imprisoning without charge MPs who opposed his policies. But as John Eliot, a sponsor of the Petition of Right wrote, “a lawful king will not do what he may do.”³¹ Post-revisionists such as J.P. Sommerville have argued that this type of thought indicates a growing ideological chasm between the King and many of his critics regarding the proper exercise of the royal prerogative under the ancient

³⁰ Geoffrey Elton’s seminal article seems to have sparked the revisionist onslaught against both Whig and Marxist accounts of how clear-cut ideological divisions between the Stuarts and Parliament stretching back to James I’s ascension anticipated the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642. See his “A High Road to Civil War?” in C.H. Carter, ed., *From the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation: Essays in Honor of Garrett Mattingly* (London: Cape, 1966). Key revisionist works include the following, among many others: Conrad Russell, *Causes of the English Civil War* (1990); *Unrevolutionary England, 1603-1642* (London: Hambledon Press, 1990); Kevin Sharpe, *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England* (London: Pinter, 1992); *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (1992); Glenn Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution* (1992); Mark Kishlansky, *Parliamentary Selection: Social and Political Choice in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). As Janelle Greenberg writes, “so compellingly have the revisionists rewritten early Stuart History that they themselves occupy the historiographical mainstream.” See Greenberg’s *The Radical Face of the Ancient Constitution: St. Edward’s Laws in Early Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 119.

³¹ Quoted in Morrill, “Rhetoric and Action,” in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 91-113; Glenn Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution*, 162-167.

constitution.³² Janelle Greenberg has lent support to this post-revisionist scholarship. While recognizing that common law lawyers such as Sir Edward Coke granted the existence of an absolute prerogative that permitted the King to act above the law in certain circumstances, especially through the exercise of dispensing power, she agrees with post-revisionists that the King's opponents also found him in violation of an ancient constitutionalist tradition that stretched back at least as early as the Saxon period.³³ Indeed, a promise to abide by the Confessor's laws formed part of the coronation oath. To those in Parliament who opposed his schemes, Charles was treading dangerously close to the fine line that separated the royal prerogative from arbitrary government, which Englishmen defined theoretically as tyranny. But as John Morrill has stressed, during the period of Charles' personal rule, England's political elites opposed to Stuart policy would contain their charges of tyranny to the King's ministers, thus staving off a decisive, constitutional confrontation that neither Charles nor Parliament wanted.³⁴

The godly on Coleman Street, both the mean and powerful, became vocal critics of Stuart policy. Popular disdain for the Stuart Dynasty registered strongly in the ward, even before Charles chose to rule without Parliament. In June 1628, the neighborhood cheered the murder of Charles' most trusted but popularly reviled councilor, the Duke of

³² J.P. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England* (London: Longman, 1986). In an important assessment of the revisionist/post-revisionist controversy, Norah Carlin sides with Sommerville's thesis. See her *Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 73-103. Ann Hughes' *Causes of the English Civil War* is also critical of revisionism. See 155-183 for her critique of revisionist assessments of court-parliament conflict. For a response to revisionist historiography from a Marxist perspective, see James Holstun's *Ehud's Dagger*, 9-46. Christopher Hill's entire body of work runs squarely against the revisionist trend, even though much of it pre-dates this scholarship.

³³ For Greenberg's critique of the revisionist view of the absence of ideological conflict in early Stuart England, see her chapter "By Lex Terrae is Meant the Laws of St. Edward the Confessor: Footprints of Saxons in the Early Seventeenth Century," *Radical Face of the Ancient Constitution*, 116-181.

³⁴ Morrill, "Rhetoric and Action," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 102-113. Other revisionist historians such as Conrad Russell, Kevin Sharpe, and J.P. Kenyon would dispute this conclusion, and have characterized the period between the Petition of Right Crisis and the Scottish wars as an era of relative calm.

Buckingham. The Duke's alleged Catholicism and his ties to absolutist Spain accounted in part for the crowd's reaction, although Buckingham's reputed homosexuality offered another target for the mob's derision.³⁵ The assassin, John Felton, walked down Coleman Street itself on the way to his execution, where a placard in a tenement window read:

“Who rules the Kingdom? The King
Who rules the King? The Duke
Who rules the Duke? The Devil”

A man who read the placard to the crowd was later hanged.³⁶ The alderman Isaac Pennington openly resisted Charles' taxation policies, organizing opposition during Hampden's trial to both the collection of ship money and the Forced Loan of 1637. This led to the formation of clubs that met in the ward's taverns to oppose Charles' revenue schemes, clubs whose violent harangues against the Stuart Dynasty worried even erstwhile opponents of the King like John Pym. According to David Kirby, “The authorities encountered more opposition to the loan in the ward of Coleman Street than anywhere else in the city.”³⁷

In matters of religion, Charles' policies made him particularly unpopular on Coleman Street. The King's miscalculations in religion were perhaps in the long-term more disastrous than his antipathy towards Parliament, although by no means were they measures that would lead “inevitably” to civil war. At home, in communities like

³⁵ Cogswell, “The People's Love: The Duke of Buckingham and Popularity,” in Cogswell, Cust, and Lake, eds., *Politics, Religion, and Popularity*, 211-234; Holstun, *Ehud's Dagger*, 143-186. James Holstun's chapter on the Duke of Buckingham's much-maligned assassin, John Felton, challenges earlier work portraying him as a deranged madman. Holstun treats Felton as a radicalized saint acting on the republican idea that tyrannicide would provide a catalyst for political transformation. Holstun's work, unlike earlier scholarship, recognizes the “opposition of feeling” infused in Felton's writing, whose opaqueness owes not to insanity, but to the period in which it was written, before the maturation of English republican discourse during the mid-seventeenth Century.

³⁶ Kirby, “Radicals of St. Stephen's,” 107.

³⁷ Pearl, *Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution*, 97, 236; Kirby, “Radicals of St. Stephen's,” 105.

Coleman Street, a good gauge of godly opinion in England, saints saw Stuart religious policies in a clearly negative light. Nowhere was this more apparent than in their scorn for the Archbishop of London, William Laud. Laud's ceremonial reforms smacked of Catholicism to the saints, who also resented his anti-Calvinist theology and his determined attempts to enforce conformity within the ranks of the clergy. Several Coleman Street ministers numbered among the London clerics that Laud disciplined for straying from his liturgical and ceremonial dictates.³⁸

Charles inflamed his godly critics on Coleman Street by appointing Laud to the See of Canterbury in 1633. With Laud occupying the most important church office in the realm, Charles sought to roll back the Calvinist tide in the English and Scottish churches. As part of this effort, Laud attempted to impose what his critics called an "Arminian" theology that rejected predestination.³⁹ Along with anti-Calvinist doctrine, Laud sought to restore the traditional liturgy and church calendar while he reintroduced Catholic paraphernalia such as stained glass and communion rails.⁴⁰ But as Christopher Hill points out, Arminianism was "an enemy word" like "puritan." Laud himself said, "I have nothing to do to defend Arminius," the Dutch theologian for whom the body of religious

³⁸ *The Vindication of the Cobbler* (London, 1640), 1; Kirby, "Radicals of St. Stephen's," 107; Atwater, *History of the Colony of New Haven*, 29-35; Williams, "London Puritanism," 474-479; Calder, *New Haven Colony*, 35.

³⁹ For Arminianism, see Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 284-292, and Hughes, *Causes of the English Civil War*, 108-114, although the definitive work on this subject remains Nicholas Tyacke's *Anti-Calvinism: The Rise of English Arminianism, 1590-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁴⁰ William Lamont, "The Religious Origins of the English Civil War," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 3-10; Morrill, "Rhetoric and Action," in *ibid.*, 91-113; Anthony Milton, "The Creation of Laudianism: A New Approach," in Cogswell, Cust, and Lake, eds., *Politics, Religion, and Popularity*, 162-184; Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), Chapter 3. Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles*, 127-134.

thought was named. The actuality of Laud's Arminianism notwithstanding, his enemies used the label effectively to damage his Protestant credentials.⁴¹

The heavy-handed style chosen by the Archbishop to enforce his policies was even more unpopular on Coleman Street, particularly in his use of the Court of High Commission to crackdown on "puritan" troublemakers. Much like Charles' Court of Star Chamber, another effective instrument of political and religious control, High Commission regularly resorted to exemplary torture. The five ministers who witnessed How's sermon at *The Nag's Head* had been "silenced" by Laud, and might have counted themselves fortunate for receiving lenient sentences.⁴² How himself appeared before the Court of High Commission in April 1629 for holding a conventicle with John Lathrop, who also preached to a separatist congregation in Southwark. In 1632, Laud charged Lathrop with the same offence and imprisoned him for two years. Upon his release, Lathrop joined a wing of the flock that had previously flown to New England, taking with him a large contingent from his congregation. Those who stayed joined Samuel How on Coleman Street.⁴³ Early heroes of the struggle against the King and Bishop such as John Lilburne, the future Leveller, and William Prynne, Lilburne's future adversary within the godly camp, nonetheless shared the common misfortune of having been whipped and branded in the pillory in 1637. Prynne's ears had already been shorn-off by order of Laud's Court of High Commission in late 1634. According to Kevin Sharpe, "no other event made such an impression on the public consciousness" as Prynne's "tyrannous"

⁴¹ Christopher Hill, "Archbishop Laud and the English Revolution," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 135.

⁴² *The Vindication of the Cobbler* (London, 1640), 1.

⁴³ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 47-48; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 36-37; W.T. Whitley, "The Hubbard-How-More Church, From Gould's Copy of Stinton's Repository, Text of 1699 by John Webb, Jr., Notes of 1712 by Benjamin Stinton," *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* 2 (1910-1911), 33-35.

public mutilation.⁴⁴ These, and other persecutory policies earned Laud the die-hard enmity of godly parliamentarians who would later pass a bill of attainder against the Archbishop, an act largely organized by Coleman Street Ward MPs.⁴⁵

Laud's execution, of course, took place well into the Civil War, but revisionist historians go too far in downplaying militant Protestantism's ability to create politicized, ideological divisions during the 1630s.⁴⁶ This may be because they have neglected to place English religious controversies within a wider geographic and historical context, specifically the Counter-Reformation, which reached its political zenith during the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). That much of Laud's reign coincided with the war would have dramatic consequences in England. The battlefield triumphs of Spain, the pillar of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, spelled doom to many English Protestants. They suspected Charles, married to the Catholic Henrietta Maria, of Roman sympathies, blamed him for England's military impotence against Spain, and held him accountable for Protestantism's decline in Europe. In the eyes of the saints, Laud's alleged popish innovations, combined with Charles' failure to mount a successful challenge to Spain, amounted to the corruption of Protestantism at home and a victory for the Counter-Reformation abroad.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 758. Sharpe rejects that the widespread sympathy for the victims can serve as a measure of the increasing popular discontent with Charles I's regime.

⁴⁵ Sharpe takes pains to exonerate High Commission from its persecutory reputation, and cites evidence that it could not have functioned as an exclusive tool of the Laudian faction. This may be so, but the fact that High Commission indicted those not targeted by Laud does not explain away the popular perception and hard evidence that the High Commission did consistently persecute "puritans." Here, in a style that pervades revisionist historiography, Sharpe postures as an iconoclast, when in the end, his work unintentionally reifies rather than undermines long-standing and widely-accepted historical knowledge. See *Personal Rule*, 374-383.

⁴⁶ For an example, see *ibid.*, 603-730.

⁴⁷ Scott, *England's Troubles*, 127-134. Scott provides a necessary corrective to the insularity of revisionist historiography by examining religious and political polarization in Stuart England within a European context. Christopher Hill also addresses this in *The English Bible and the Seventeenth Century*, 253-334.

While there was little they could do regarding events on the Continent, the Coleman Street godly concentrated their efforts at home on reviving the reformation of the English church, a pursuit that contained important political implications. A reformed English church provided a continuing safeguard against the return of Roman rule, which the godly saw alive and well in the Spanish monarchy. In this view, Spanish-styled absolutism, as an extension of Roman Catholicism, empowered Spanish kings to govern outside the rule of law. Spain's autocratic bishops, keeping the people in superstitious darkness, violated the liberties of subjects and quashed godly religion through inquisitorial courts. This combination of royal absolutism and Roman Catholicism rendered the Spanish "slaves" in their own homeland. Thus, in the eyes of the godly, the state of English liberty could be measured by the Protestant bona fides of the King and his court, as well as the monarch's adherence to the Confessor's ancient constitution. They found Charles and Laud deficient on both scores. The Archbishop's growing power only fed this fear. After the murder of Buckingham, Laud's influence on Charles came to equal if not surpass that of Thomas Wentworth, the Earl of Strafford, another figure reviled by the godly. On Coleman Street, Laud's "popish" doctrinal innovations and his frequent use of the Court of High Commission to enforce clerical discipline were perceived as "Jesuitical designs" that threatened both Protestantism and the liberties of "free-born Englishman." Consequently, Laud's religious policies convinced many of the godly in London and elsewhere that they were doomed to state tyranny and papal vassalage.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Scott, *England's Troubles*, 127-134; Caroline Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); William Lamont, "The Religious Origins of the English Civil

The St. Stephen's parish vestry responded to the Stuart Counter-Reformation by organizing counter-measures within the ward, throughout the city, across the nation, and even, as we shall see, beyond the seas. During the 1620s and 1630s, the same godly merchants and MPs we met at the outset of the chapter, Owen Roe, Isaac Pennington, Mark Hildesly, William Spurstowe, and Samuel Eastwick, gained control of the vestry.⁴⁹ By purchasing the impropriation of the parish, or the right to elect and maintain its incumbent minister, the vestry could select a minister whose doctrinal views more closely resembled their own.⁵⁰ It also allowed the parish to remain independent from the Diocese of London regarding clerical appointments. The parochial autonomy that St. Stephen's thus enjoyed would enable it to appoint the godly ministers who helped the parish earn its credentials as London's most fiercely "puritan" congregation.⁵¹

The vestry's choice of ministers clearly indicated that its sympathies ran squarely against the religious policies of the Stuart Dynasty.⁵² In 1624, the parish council selected John Davenport to fill its pastoral vacancy. Although still in conformity with the church at the time of his election, Davenport would go on to become one of London's and later New England's most famous godly ministers. Laud, while Archbishop of London, described him as "factious and popular," a man who was able "to draw after him great

War," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 1-12; Hill, *English Bible in the Seventeenth Century*, 284-293. Hill argued against seeing Laud's policies as innovations by explaining their consistency with post-Reformation church doctrine. See his *English Bible in the Seventeenth Century*, 284-293, and "Archbishop Laud and the English Revolution," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 127-150.

⁴⁹ Williams, "London Puritanism," 464; Kirby, "Radicals of St. Stephen's," 109; Liu, *Puritan London*, 194.

⁵⁰ David Kirby maintains that St. Stephen's had for centuries a "long standing association with radicalism," noting that it represented one of four parishes associated with Lollardry and the dissemination of Lutheran books. William Hunter, a Marian martyr, was a Coleman Street apprentice mentioned in John Foxe's famous *Book of Martyrs*.

⁵¹ Williams, "London Puritanism," 464, 467; Kirby, "Radicals of St. Stephen's," 100.

⁵² Kirby, "Radicals of St. Stephen's," 103, 108.

congregations and assemblies of common and mean people," which, of course, Coleman Street Ward certainly did not lack.⁵³ Davenport's fiery preaching, which railed against Catholic vestiges still within the English church, drew crowds so large that the vestrymen ordered new galleries built in the nave to hold the overflowing throngs.⁵⁴ Although these sermons electrified congregations and helped mobilize opposition to the hierarchy of the Church of England, Davenport held no illusions about the increasing risks he ran. In a 1628 letter to his patroness, Lady Vere, Davenport wrote,

Threatenings were speedily revived against us by the new Bishop of London, Dr. Laud, even the next day after the conclusion of their session. We expect a fierce storm from the enraged spirit of the two bishops. Ours, as I am informed, hath a particular aim at me upon a former quarrel: so that I expect ere long to be deprived of my pastoral charge in Coleman Street. But I am in God's hands, not in theirs; to whose good pleasure I do contentedly and cheerfully commit myself.⁵⁵

In 1633, Laud brought Davenport twice before Star Chamber. He eventually fled to Holland, but not before using the homes of several parishioners on Coleman Street to shelter another clerical renegade, John Cotton, who awaited safe passage in London for exile in the raw, muddy village of Boston, Massachusetts.⁵⁶

After Davenport's departure, the parish replaced him with John Goodwin. Called the "Great Red Dragon of Coleman Street" by his clerical enemies, he spent much of the ensuing decade confronting Laud's official rebukes.⁵⁷ After assisting Davenport in hiding Cotton, Goodwin found himself before the Court of High Commission in 1633. In

⁵³ Atwater *History of the Colony of New Haven*, 29.

⁵⁴ Kirby, "Radicals of St. Stephen's," 106; Atwater, *History of the Colony of New Haven*, 29-35.

⁵⁵ Atwater, *History of the Colony of New Haven*, 30.

⁵⁶ Kirby, "Radicals of St. Stephen's," 107; Atwater, *History of the Colony of New Haven*, 29-35; Williams, "London Puritanism," 474-479; Calder, *New Haven Colony*, 35.

⁵⁷ J.C. Spalding, "John Goodwin," in Richard Greaves and Robert Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Seventeenth-Century British Radicals*, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), 2:16-17.

1635, he again faced Laud's inquisitors for a sermon that contradicted a Church canon. The Archbishop found Goodwin's doctrine and influence so threatening that he identified the pastor as one of the Church's worst enemies in his famous "puritan" blacklist, "Information Concerning the Diocese of London."⁵⁸ Later, we will hear much more about Goodwin's emergence as a leading parliamentarian during the English Civil War.

After St. Stephen's purchased its own right to impropriation, vestrymen assisted other parishes in the same venture. The godly elite on Coleman Street thus took an advance position in organizing resistance to the English Counter-Reformation. Along with fellow-travelers from St. Magnus, St Ann's Blackfriars, and All Hallows Barking, the laymen of St. Stephen's formed a group called the Feoffees of Impropriation, which pooled the resources of wealthy saints to purchase vacant incumbencies throughout the country.⁵⁹ The feoffees filled these positions with godly ministers to widen the clerical opposition to the Laudian program. While at St. Stephen's, John Davenport became an influential feoffee, along with other prominent ward members including Samuel Aldersly, Sir Richard Smith, William Spurstowe, and Owen Roe.⁶⁰ Hardly akin to the Separatists who had already settled Plymouth Colony in New England, the ultimate design of the group lay in transforming the Church of England from within. The feoffees saw that a preaching ministry formed a front-line of sorts in the war against the Counter-Reformation, where sound doctrine preached from godly pulpits would shield the nation

⁵⁸ Williams, "London Puritanism," 480; Kirby, "Radicals of St. Stephen's," 108, 111; Liu, *London Puritanism*, 110-115, 185, 194; Spalding, "John Goodwin," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 2: 16-17.

⁵⁹ Liu, *London Puritanism*, 112; Pearl, *Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution*, 162; Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 310-312.

⁶⁰ Williams, "London Puritanism," 474; Atwater, *History of the Colony of New Haven*, 34. Davenport assumed leadership due to the esteem in which other godly divines held him, and for his connections to Lady Vere and Sir Edward Conway, one-time Privy Councilor to the King, who provided funding and influence for the feoffees.

from schism and the episcopal Anti-christ. Laud himself remarked that the feoffees “were the main instruments for the puritan faction to undo the church.”⁶¹ He thus endeavored to crush the group through the Court of Exchequer. William Prynne wrote that when the feoffees had been dissolved, Laud thumped his chest and proclaimed that this group of “puritans were the bane of the church...I was the man that did set myself against them and I thank God I have destroyed this work.”⁶² Although we should allow for exaggeration in Prynne’s account, Laud’s determination to expunge this threat remains indisputable.

Through the efforts of its Coleman Street leaders, the feoffees quest for “liberty of conscience,” defined as the right to reform religious corruption, became an organizing principle of their struggle, as a self-proclaimed “saving remnant,” to advance the cause of the Reformation. Their direct resistance to the Laudian program, as well as Charles’ personal rule, mobilized the wealth and public-spiritedness of Coleman Street’s merchant community.⁶³ Coming at a crucial point in time when England seemed to have forfeited its part in the Protestant cause on the Continent, and where the King and episcopacy appeared to rule in autocratic, “Roman” fashion, the forms of extra-legal organization pursued by the Coleman Street godly reflected their faith that government existed to serve the public good and not the arbitrary will of rulers, whether in the civil or ecclesiastical spheres. Their vision of commonwealth government and godly religion could only be achieved, within the pivotal context of the Counter-Reformation, if the

⁶¹ Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 312.

⁶² William Prynne, *Canterburie’s Doom* (London, 1646), 385-388; Dwight Brautigam, “Prelates and Politics: Uses of ‘Puritan,’ 1625-40,” in Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents*, 64, fn 26.

⁶³ Kirby, “Radicals of St. Stephen’s,” 103; Atwater, *History of the Colony of New Haven*, 29-30; Pearl, *Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution*, 169.

interests of rulers and the ruled existed in a harmonious balance to advance the Protestant cause as it did battle with antichristian tyrants. At the parish level, the voice of the parishioners and their parochial vicar must be one; likewise in the state, the interests of “the people” and their monarch could not be at odds if religious and civil liberty were to be preserved.

Every godly parish, built on the feoffee model, reserved the sovereign power to choose its minister, forming a covenanted commonwealth in miniature where each believer, entitled by their “sainthood,” or membership within the Elect, possessed a voice in the selection of the cleric who would govern the parish through the consent of the elected vestrymen. In matters of religion, the idea of a parochial commonwealth was defined directly against the episcopal model that Laud was struggling to re-entrench across Britain. As the American historian Stephen Foster noted, “before Massachusetts or New Haven, sainthood for the Puritans had already become the entrée to *citizenship*.”⁶⁴ In other words, while in England, the godly defined their notions of commonwealth government and civic duty against religious persecution and personal rule.

By using the parish of St. Stephen’s as an organizational forcing house, Coleman Street saints directly confronted the Stuart attempt to employ personal rule and the episcopal hierarchy as instruments of political control during an intensive period of state centralization. The opposition to arbitrary revenue schemes in the ward violated the spirit of Stuart governance, which, paralleling the theory of Charles’ kingly rivals, sought to eliminate through a rigid, descending theory of sovereignty, any ascending political or

⁶⁴ Foster, *The Long Argument*, “Introduction.”

religious counterweight.⁶⁵ As Charles' father James I succinctly put it, "No Bishop, No King." Each institution figured critically in the Stuart state's attempt to build a more efficient government and disciplined church. While opposing these projects, the godly on Coleman Street embraced a theory as stark as James', although their slogan might have read "no reformation; no liberty."

The stark polarization over the fundamentals of a godly commonwealth highlights how religious attitudes conditioned the commonwealth principles of those who opposed Charles' personal rule, and supports Greenberg's post-revisionist account of the ancient constitutional vectors that shaped the political hostility to the King before the outbreak of war.⁶⁶ It is hard to reconcile revisionist arguments concerning the lack of ideological conflict in Stuart England with the activities of the Coleman Street godly. As J.P. Sommerville has argued, Charles' and Laud's ideas concerning commonwealth government were out of step with conventional understandings of the ancient constitution.⁶⁷ This was aptly illustrated in Laud's 1626 sermon to Parliament, in which he remarked that the Magna Charta "had an obscure birth from usurpation and was fostered and shown to the world by rebellion." Laud also viewed criticisms of Buckingham that appealed to the ancient constitution as a plot by "puritans" to overthrow

⁶⁵ Michael Young, *Charles I* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 81; Carlin, *Causes of the English Civil War*, 139-140; Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution*, 13. Morrill argues that Charles' political initiatives amounted to state-building innovations. On the other hand, Norah Carlin argues that Charles looked backward, and not forward, and tried to revive the ideal of the feudal monarchy. What Hughes misses at least in this context, and what Morrill grasps, is the association hostile contemporaries made between Charles' "arbitrary" revenue schemes and his "popish" church policies. It is only fair to point out, however, that Carlin does recognize the pitfalls in separating religious from political questions when trying to explain opposition to Charles. See her *Causes of the Civil War*, 73-103, especially 100-102.

⁶⁶ Hughes, *Causes of the English Civil War*, 62-66.

⁶⁷ See Sommerville's *Politics and Ideology in England, 1603-1640* (London: Longman, 1986) for his argument against the revisionist view that pre-Civil War politics was marked by a "consensus" between king and parliament over the proper powers that each could claim under the ancient constitution.

the monarchy.⁶⁸ He meant, of course, to discredit Charles' opponents through hyperbole, but it does suggest, alongside Laud's view of the ancient constitution's origins, that powerful elements within the Stuart Court regarded godly opponents as hostile to the privileges of monarchy, and thus ideological enemies. The Stuart Court as well as the godly can thus be described as drawing ideological lines in the sand during the 1630s. Nonetheless, despite the widening gap, both the court and its opponents claimed to uphold the ancient constitution and tried to reconcile their opposing views for the peace of the kingdom.

But admiration for the ancient constitution and the desire for peace did not prevent the Stuarts and their opponents from forming dramatically different conceptions of godliness, obedience, justice, and liberty. The godly questioned whether a king who recklessly exercised his prerogative at the expense of the public good had not contradicted the fundamental substance of the ancient constitution, a king, moreover, who kept ministers whose religious policies threatened the moral fabric of the commonwealth by abetting the Counter-Reformation. The activities of the Coleman Street godly bear out Burgess' argument, namely that although most Englishmen before 1625 would have agreed that the King rightfully held absolute prerogative in church and state, they were becoming increasingly skeptical as to whether the Stuart Dynasty in the years to follow justly compelled the unconditional obedience of its subjects, principally because its policies appeared to contradict reformed religion and hence the public good. The popular support on Coleman Street for the godly position suggests that sections of the English population adopted the position that the dictates of moral conscience might, in certain

⁶⁸ Quoted in Hughes, *Causes of the English Revolution*, 91; Malcolm Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 273.

extraordinary circumstances, justify resistance to traditional forms of authority. This was an important fissure in what has been called the “Jacobean Consensus,” and one that would have dramatic implications for the course of English politics once Charles recalled Parliament in 1640 to face the Scottish threat.⁶⁹

Millenarianism would deepen this fissure, although with the notable exception of Glenn Burgess, revisionist historians have often overlooked the millennial convictions held by many among the godly party as a critical source of ideological hostility to the Stuart Court.⁷⁰ These convictions could, perhaps more than anything else, blur the already hazy distinction between politics and religion in the godly mind. Millennialism elevated the saints’ distrust of the Stuart Dynasty to cosmic proportions, and the congregants of St. Stephen’s were reminded of this every time their shadow darkened the doorway of their church, for above the entranceway a relief of the apocalypse had been carved into the stone portal.⁷¹ Since the beginning of the Reformation, many English Protestants had interpreted the downfall of the Roman Church as a portent of the millennial golden age foretold in the Book of Revelation. Revelation, and other prophetic scriptures in Isaiah and Daniel promised that after a period of tribulation during the end days, the final battle, Armageddon, would end with the defeat of Anti-christ’s legions and the return of Christ the King, who would end the oppression of the saints and reign on earth with them for a thousand years. William Perkins, Thomas Mede, and above all John Foxe in his *Book of Martyrs* exhorted the English to pick up the Protestant

⁶⁹ Burgess, *Politics of the Ancient Constitution*, 109-138, 179-189.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 130-139, 170-171.

⁷¹ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 23-49; Jessie D. Wright, *London’s Old Buildings and Where to Find Them* (London, 1937); A.E. Daniel, *London City Churches* (London, 1896).

standard to turn back Catholic Spain's onslaught in central Europe and the Netherlands.⁷² During Laud's tenure, godly divines pursued by Star Chamber and the High Commission understood their persecution within the context of apocalyptic texts and searched them for a prophetic course of action. They often chose controversial paths. John Cotton's preaching on the end times, for example, helped convince John Davenport that non-conformity with the Church of England was the only acceptable alternative to complete separation.⁷³

Although Davenport warned his Coleman Street congregation that God would pour out his wrath on a faithless people, he also preached that the godly, steadfast in their devotion to the true course of reformation, would be spared from the leveling scythe of apocalyptic retribution. Dreading the wrath that God would mete out to apostates, the saints searched for consensus about the proper course for England's reformation. This apocalyptic energy gave the godly a sense of unity, that if faithful, God would preserve them, as a saving remnant, through the trials and tribulations of persecution.⁷⁴ But in contrast, the same millennial zeal could sharpen commitments to a variety of conflicting doctrines espoused by different sections of the militant Protestant community. In this way, millennialism intensified opposition to Charles and galvanized godly commitment

⁷² Michael St. Clair, *Millenarianism in Historical Context* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1972); Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 13-49; Richard Popkin, "Seventeenth Century Millenarianism," in Malcolm Bull, ed., *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in the Seventeenth Century*, passim.; *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*, 284-323; William Lamont, *Richard Baxter and the Millennium* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), passim.

⁷³ John Cotton, *The Powering Out of the Seven Vials* (London, 1642); *An Exposition Upon the Thirteenth Chapter of Revelation* (London, 1645).

⁷⁴ J.F. Maclear, "New England and the Fifth Monarchy: The Quest for the Millennium in Early American Puritanism," *William and Mary Quarterly* 32 (1975), 224-250; Francis Bremer, "In Defense of Regicide: John Cotton and the Execution of Charles I," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38 (1980), 105-108; W.C. Ford, "Cotton's Moses His Judicials," *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, 16 (1902), 282; Sacvan Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 3-63.

to increasingly extra-legal measures, like the feoffees of impropriation. But when saints turned away from their common enemies at Whitehall, Lambeth, and St. Peter's, and toward their contending views about the true path to reform, their millennialism only reinforced their pre-existing divisions. When the stakes for the godly were apocalyptic, compromise became impossible.

A closer look at the wide range of godly congregations in Coleman Street Ward dramatically reveals the internal conflicts that raged among the opponents of Stuart church policy. As we have seen in the case of Samuel How, Archbishop Laud's problems with Coleman Street extended beyond St. Stephen's and into the crowded tenements of the ward's back-streets, which contained at least four distinct, non-parochial congregations called "conventicles" or "sects."⁷⁵ These congregations, which met in churches, private homes, shops, taverns, or converted warehouses, were organized in a variety of ways, for a variety of purposes. Some were simply groups from local parishes that met to discuss and usually criticize sermons of their parish priest "that were not of a gospel spirit." This tradition would be carried to New England, where the prophetess Anne Hutchinson would mobilize opposition to the clergy through a conventicle that

⁷⁵ Kirby, "Radicals of St. Stephen's," 114. Even before Laud had ascended to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, he had singled out Coleman Street Ward as a hive of sectarian anarchy. But one should not think of these sects as rigid, distinct denominations with precisely defined theologies. For instance, the Baptists and Quakers would only evolve from these loosely organized religious meetings by the early 1650s. Before and during the Civil War, diversity of belief within the sects matched the fluidity of their constantly changing membership. Jonathan Scott takes great pains to make this point in *England's Troubles*, correcting what he sees as a major conceptual flaw in the study of militant Protestantism. He is more interested in how "practical Christianity" united the radicals in the effort to overcome the inward and outward bondage of sin through conversion, piety, charity to the poor, and the struggle against political oppression. See chapters eleven and twelve in particular. Patrick Collinson's essay, "Sects and the Evolution of Puritanism," in Bremer, ed., *Puritanism: Trans-Atlantic Perspectives*, 146-166, offers a succinct account of sectarian organization and religious convictions. Also helpful is Collinson's "The English Conventicle," in W.J. Sheils and D. Wood, eds., *Voluntary Religion, Studies in Church History* (Oxford, 1986), 111-208.

attracted support from a group that ranged from indentured servants to the colony's governor, Henry Vane. Coleman Street's conventicles, however, were mostly attended by large numbers of London's poor as well as "middling" merchants and artisans. Unlike godly clerics, many conventiclars embraced complete separation from the Church of England.

Coleman Street Ward's conventicles were led by laymen known as "mechanick preachers," the most famous of which was Samuel How, the radical we met at the outset of the chapter.⁷⁶ Usually tradesmen, mechanick preachers had not received holy orders, nor any formal university training; they were self-proclaimed ministers of the gospel who preached through the authority of the Holy Spirit. The mechanick preachers and their congregations believed that the English clergy, with their burdensome tithes, popish doctrine, and false claims to spiritual authority, held no jurisdiction over the religious lives of the Elect. Reading this into the prophecies of the Book of Revelation, they came to see ordained ministers and the ordinances of the church as instruments of Anti-christ. Mechanick preachers delivered this message in an unconventional style defined against the rhetorical conventions of more mainstream godly clerics. Samuel How's case is again instructive. His preferred method of delivery was to overturn a laundry tub on Coleman Street, and preach atop it with an affected style utilizing extravagant facial expressions, eye-rolling, wild hand gestures, and even spitting to drive a point home against his enemy, the "human learning and wisdom" of the ordained clergy, whom How believed "crosseth and opposeth simplicity of his (Jesus's) way."

⁷⁶ Christopher Hill brought "mechanick preachers" into scholarly consideration, addressing not only their radical egalitarian spiritualism, but the impact they would have as organs of republican politicization before and during the English Civil War. See *The World Turned Upside*, 287-305.

For those who came to hear How and other Coleman Street preachers, the path to salvation led not through church ordinances, but the infusion of God's gift of free grace. As "antinomians," they believed that free grace put the saint above and beyond the "carnal" laws of men. By removing salvation from the purview of the church, and opening it up to the unmediated distribution of free grace, this strain of godly religion turned on its head the Calvinistic concept of the predestined division between the saved and the unregenerate masses. Supported by antinomian congregations, mechanick preachers were the organic product of a radical spiritism that democratized election by rejecting "human inventions" in Christianity that, to their view, contradicted the will, word, and spirit of God.⁷⁷

This radical Christianity held a special attraction for the poor, and helps explain why impoverished sections of London like Coleman Street Ward became magnets for mechanick preachers and conventicle organization. The poor dominated these congregations; as we noted at the outset of the chapter, Samuel How picked *The Nag's Head* tavern to preach to an audience that hostile observers described as "vile," "vermin," "very inconsiderable," and "men low and mean, and of no account." Congregants described themselves as "poor, obscure, and illiterate." They appear to us now as the working poor of the seventeenth century.⁷⁸

They flocked to London conventicles because mechanick preachers turned upside down conventional conceptions of spiritual dignity and Christian justice that

⁷⁷ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 285; Edwards, *Gangreana*, 23, 36; Unfortunately, David Como's *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil War England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004) appeared too late to make use of in this dissertation.

⁷⁸ Kirby, "Radicals of St. Stephen's," 117; Dailey, "Root and Branch," 117; *London's Glory, or the The Riot and Ruine of the Fifth Monarchy Men* (London, 1661); Thomas Venner, *A Door of Hope* (London, 1661) See the frontispiece to John Taylor's diatribe against mechanick preachers called, *A Swarme of Sectaries* (London, 1640). How is pictured true-to-form, holding forth from on top of his tub.

marginalized the poor. They embraced Acts 10:34 as a spiritual creed and world view, that “God was no respecter of persons,” meaning each member of his creation was equally precious in his sight regardless of class or social station. How repeated this phrase in his sermon of 1638, and as Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker have noted, it would become a radical rallying cry during the English Revolution. It is interesting to see how this belief contradicted Calvinism but intersected with another common, although understudied aspect of the mechanick preacher’s gospel, the tenets of universal salvation.

As a doctrine propounded in these conventicles, “Christ’s dying for all men” contained the promise of regeneration and transformation for the poor, who while attending services conducted by parochial, Calvinist clergy would often be reminded that the prosperity of godly men served as a sign of their providential election. These same clerics often viewed poverty as a sign of moral degeneracy and eternal damnation. Many lay saints of the richer and middling sort subscribed to scriptural verses that justified a less than charitable view of the poor, and two in particular seem to have achieved almost obligatory status, “Ye have the poor always with you” (Matthew 26:11) and “He is worse than an infidel that provideth not for his family” (I Timothy 5:8). “Out of men fallen,” wrote the godly divine Thomas Shepard, God “picks out usually the poorest and vilest.”⁷⁹ The poor, maintained the famous theologian William Perkins, were “commonly of no civil society or corporation, nor of any particular church.”⁸⁰ Defining themselves against what they viewed as the free-wheeling morality of the aristocracy and the vile poor, godly men of means embraced their occupations as vocations. God smiled upon the

⁷⁹ Ziff, *Puritanism in America*, 85; Shepard, *Works*, 2: 103.

⁸⁰ Ian Breward, ed., *The Works of William Perkins* (London: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), 1: 755.

saint's hard work, sobriety, and thrift with material abundance; he blasted the idle with rags, poverty, and damnation.⁸¹ Seen as shiftless vagabonds steeped in vice and corruption, the poor could be blamed for their own condition.⁸² Unworthy of God's respect, dependent on the charity of others, they could hardly expect the respect of godly men. They could expect, if rendered homelessness, to be whipped from parish to parish according to sixteenth-century vagabond statutes. Through the gospel of universal salvation, however, a believer could lay claim to godliness and salvation through God's free grace. In this way, poor saints could see their poverty as Christ-like, and not as a conspicuous badge of their spiritual degeneracy.

Free grace teachings in the conventicles re-worked traditional Calvinism and discarded hierarchical notions of spiritual election; its adherents, rejecting learned dogma, embraced lay preaching and congregational deliberation as the source of sound teaching and understanding. On Coleman Street, in popularly-organized conventicles, the poor, mean, and illiterate redefined sacred hierarchies as profane, and reconfigured traditional notions of blasphemy and social inversion as sacred. And since God was no respecter of persons -rich and poor, tradesman and merchant, pauper and prince, men and in some very important cases women -claimed the authority to preach, and to stir each other up to do the work of Christ on earth. In fact, women seemed to have outnumbered men in the sects. Edward Pagitt, their critic, claimed conventicles "lead captive silly women who are always learning," and as we will see on Coleman Street and in Boston, women ascended

⁸¹ Ziff, *Puritanism in America*, 17-20; Bernard Bailyn, ed., *The Apologia of Robert Keayne* (Gloucester, 1970), Introduction; Manning, *Aristocrats*, 6-15.

⁸² Hill, *English Bible*, 160-161.

to positions of social authority seldom open to them in the seventeenth century.⁸³ The men and women of the conventicles thus organized themselves to combat antichristian institutions and to advance their radical vision of the reformation. Condemning the “carnal” or man-made norms that kept unlawful authority in place, spiritists concluded that they had no place in a godly church, and even more controversially, in a godly commonwealth.⁸⁴

By diverting focus away from the world of court and parliament and to the taverns and mean places where conventicles met, we *do* see, quite clearly, ideological polarization over the nature of justice, godly social organization, and sovereign political and religious authority. This polarization existed between the conventiclars and the parochial godly, as well as the conventiclars and the Stuart church hierarchy. Although revisionist historians have written that the urban poor acceded to a wider social consensus regarding the rightfulness of their subordination, the conventicles of Coleman Street Ward offer ample evidence to the contrary.⁸⁵

In a radical re-conceptualization of legitimate authority and the role of “the mean and no account” in advancing godly reformation, Samuel How proclaimed:

God’s ordinary way is among the foolish and weak and vile, so that when as the wise, rich, noble and learned come to receive the gospel, they then come to make

⁸³ Ephraim Pagitt, *Heresiography* (London, 1648), A3. See Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) for work on the leadership roles women assumed in the sects as prophetesses, and the language and rhetorical forms they used to both condemn what they regarded as Anti-christian, and to command authority and legitimacy among the elect. Also see James Holstun, “The Public Spiritedness of Anna Trapnell,” in *Ehud’s Dagger*, 257-304; Kate Chedzoy, “Female Prophecy in the Seventeenth Century,” in William Zunder and Suzanne Trill, eds., *Writing and the English Renaissance* (London, 1996), 238-54; Patricia Crawford, “The Challenges to Patriarchalism,” in John Morrill, ed., *Revolution and Restoration* (London: Collins and Brown, 1992), 112-28.

⁸⁴ Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 70-72; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 37-43.

⁸⁵ For a classic revisionist argument on this subject, see Mark Kishlansky’s *Parliamentary Selection* (1986). Also see Norah Carlin’s summary, *Causes of the English Civil War*, 67-68.

themselves equal with them of the lower sort, the foolish vile and unlearned; for those be the true heirs of it and therefore it was not in vain that James said, Harken my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor, he well saw that the rich and carnall were dull of hearing.⁸⁶

Drawing on the prophecies of Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, and the Book of Revelation, the gospel of the London conventicles held out a special role for the poor in sacred history, maintaining that they would play a leading part in advancing the Kingdom of God on earth.⁸⁷

The poor of Coleman Street made clear that they embraced this message even before the outbreak of the Civil War. How's 1638 sermon questioned the legitimacy of clerical pronouncements concerning obedience to clergy, social superiors, employers, magistrates, and masters. In turn, he inspired working-class saints as well as their fellow-travellers from other social classes to challenge the cultural values, as well as the authority figures, which held the poor in temporal subjection. In *The Sufficiencie of the Spirits Teaching Without Human Learning*, How warned the well-to-do parishioners of St. Stephens to "be not high minded, but make yourselves equal to them of the lower sort."⁸⁸ He went on to call for an egalitarian revolution within the godly movement. How thought this was necessary to bring the class inequalities amongst the brethren in line with what he saw as the true, leveling course of reformation. Citing Acts 10:34, How exclaimed to the gritty crowd gathered in front of *The Nag's Head*,

⁸⁶ How, *Sufficiencie of the Spirit*, B2.

⁸⁷ For an illuminating example, see Hanserd Knollys, *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory* (London, 1641).

⁸⁸ How, *Sufficiencie of the Spirit*, B2. George Thomason, the seventeenth-century bookseller who made the work of future historians immensely richer by collecting thousands of religious and political pamphlets, scribbled the word 'Cobbler' beside How's name on his 1644 copy of How's tract.

God respects no man's person...so that no flesh should glory, and he hath chosen the foolish things and the vile things in man's account, he hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise.⁸⁹

How and Coleman Street Ward's lay preachers presented a deep challenge to traditional norms of social deference and constituted political and religious authority. The heresiographer Ephraim Pagitt complained in one of his many pamphlets attacking mechanick preachers that

Everyone that listeth, turneth preacher, as Shoe-makers, cobblers, button-makers, hostlers and such-like, take upon them to expound the holy scriptures, intrude into our pulpits, and vent strange doctrine, tending to faction, sedition and blasphemy.⁹⁰

We should note that not all tradesmen turned to lay preaching, as Pagitt would have us believe. But the connection he noted between blasphemy and sedition was nonetheless real, and this was not lost on Archbishop Laud or King Charles, whose efforts to enforce orthodox doctrine and observance made no distinction between mechanick preacher and "puritan" divine. Their persecutory policies also belied their recognition that godly criticisms of the English church went beyond doctrinal quibbles; they questioned the very legitimacy of Charles' sovereignty.

Charles' and Laud's fears of the subversive contagion of the leveling spirit were more than justified. Samuel How, who also preached regularly in a meetinghouse on White Alley, was far from the only tub-thumping minister of the gospel on Coleman Street. Before moving there, How had originally belonged to the influential Southwark congregation of the separatist Henry Jacob. Jacob's congregation, which also included

⁸⁹ How, *Sufficiencie of the Spirit*, D.

⁹⁰ Ephraim Pagitt, *Heresiography or a Description and History of the Hereticks and Sectaries Sprang-Up in These Latter Times* (London, 6th ed., April 1662), 36.

John Lathrop, had returned to London in the 1620s after a period of exile in Holland. The anabaptist and future Fifth Monarchist John Canne, who had extensive contacts with this church, moved to Amsterdam in the mid-1630s and set up an exile press that churned out anti-Stuart propaganda for England's godly underground. Canne's pamphlets urged what parochial saints could not as yet accept, a community of gathered churches completely separated from the Church of England, an idea originally inspired by Henry Jacob.⁹¹ The influence of Canne's tracts spread beyond Europe, and shaped the beliefs of American radicals like Roger Williams, who cited the work of the Dutch exile in his plea for toleration during his 1640s pamphlet war with fellow New England divine, John Cotton.⁹² During the Interregnum, Canne would gather his own sect in Coleman Street, which attracted saints freshly returned from New England. This conventicle might have included Williams himself, whose second trip home coincided with Canne's time in London.⁹³ Canne was also joined by another future Fifth Monarchist on Coleman Street named Thomas Venner, who, although we can't be sure, was probably a member of Samuel How's congregation. Venner, who came to London and lived there until he left for New England in 1637, was an associate of Stephen More, a mechanick preacher who ministered with How. In February 1637, Edward Penton, recently returned from

⁹¹ John Canne, *The Neccessitie of Separation* (Amsterdam, 1635); Murray Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 15-34; Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 39; W.T. Whitley, "The Hubbard-How-More Church," *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* (1910-1911), 32.

⁹² Edward Stillingfleet, *The Unreasonableness of Separation* (London, 1647), 54; John Cotton, *Way of the Congregational Churches Cleared* (London, 1646); Roger Williams, *Bloody Tenet of Persecution* (London, 1646).

⁹³ Keith Sprunger, *Trumpets from the Tower: English Puritan Printing in the Netherlands 1600-1640* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1994.) Canne would later go on to become a republican editor of the commonwealth newspaper, *The Parliamentary Intelligencer*. See J.G. Muddiman, *The King's Journalist 1659-1689: Studies in the Reign of Charles II* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1923), 125-128.

Massachusetts, was arrested on Coleman Street “for vending scandalous books.”⁹⁴

Perhaps Venner and Penton discussed the prospects New England held for the kind of militant Protestantism practiced on Coleman Street?

Like Canne and Venner, many of the radicals on Coleman Street would go on to become republicans during the 1640s. The booksellers Henry Overton and Livewell Chapman frequented the ward’s sectarian gatherings, and became well-known publicists for the godly cause in Old and New England, printing the work of Coleman Street conventiclers as well as the considerable output of John Cotton, and his congregant in Boston’s First Church, William Aspinwall, a fierce millenarian.⁹⁵ During the English Civil War, Overton, Chapman, and Aspinwall became republicans and supporters of the Levellers. Edmund Chillenden, a future New Model Army soldier and Leveller, could also be found mingling among the congregations.⁹⁶ He was joined by John Okey, who went on to command a regiment in the New Model Army. Okey later conspired with Thomas Venner in his 1656 plot against Oliver Cromwell. Future Levellers John Lilburne and William Walwyn lived in Moorfields, a neighborhood in the northern section of Coleman Street Ward. Hanserd Knollys, who would become a revered figure in the sectarian world, held a meeting on nearby Bell Alley after returning from a brief

⁹⁴ Bernard Capp, “Thomas Venner,” in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 3: 268-270; Whitley, “The Hubbard-How-More Church,” 41.

⁹⁵ During the Interregnum, Chapman frequented Venner’s meetings on Swann Alley and printed Fifth Monarchist tracts, as well as James Harrington’s 1656 addition of *Oceana*. For his attendance at Venner’s meetings, see British Library Add Ms 4459 Fos 111-12. Overton sold tracts by Samuel How, the Levellers, and John Cotton.

⁹⁶ Liu, *Puritan London*, 82-84; Kirby, “Radicals of St. Stephen’s,” 114-117.

but turbulent stay in New England.⁹⁷ Knollys supported the Levellers during the famous Putney Debates of 1647, although his enthusiasm for the movement would wane as the decade wore on.

Edward Barber's sect also met on Bell Alley, a congregation later ministered to by Thomas Lamb, a mechanick preacher and future Leveller.⁹⁸ Convicted by the Star Chamber for his heretical preaching, Lamb had spent a year in prison before venturing to London where he joined John Goodwin at St. Stephen's parish. Soon dissatisfied with St. Stephen's, he gathered his own church on Bell Alley, where teeming crowds overflowed the meetinghouse and strained from the adjoining courtyard to hear his exhortations concerning universal salvation.⁹⁹ It was here that Lamb re-baptized Henry Denne, who possessed a Cambridge education and ordination in the Church of England, but who nonetheless left the fold, swept up in the spirit of the radical reformation.¹⁰⁰ Lamb was joined at the pulpit by the "Woman of Ely," a mysterious prophetess suspected by some in New England of influencing the Boston conventicler, Anne Hutchinson, many of whose followers later joined Coleman Street congregations after returning to England.¹⁰¹ Another woman, a Mrs. Attaway, might have preached on Coleman Street. The

⁹⁷ Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 96-97; White, "Hanserd Knollys," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 2: 161.

⁹⁸ Liu, *Puritan London*, 82-84.

⁹⁹ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 284; William Thomas Whitley, *History of the British Baptists* (London, 1923), 36, 38.

¹⁰⁰ J.M. Cramp, *The History of the Baptist Church*, Chapter 6, Section 9.

http://www.pbministries.org/History/J.%20M.%20Cramp/baptist%20history/baptist_history.htm.

¹⁰¹ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 284-287; Whitley, *British Baptists*, 36, 38, 17-62; Battis, *Saints and Sectaries*, 43n; Edwards, *Gangreana*, 2: 29; John Wilson, "A Report of the Trial of Mrs. Ann Hutchinson," in David D. Hall, ed., *The Antinomian Controversy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 380-381.

¹⁰¹ Ironically, John Goodwin hired Thomas Edwards to preach to Coleman Street's poor about the dangers of radical spiritism. It would not be long before Goodwin found himself on the wrong side of Edwards, as well as another heresiographer named John Vicar, who lambasted the outspoken pastor in his *Coleman Street Conclave Visited* (London, 1648).

heresiographer Robert Baillie called her “the mistress of all she-preachers of Coleman Street,” and allegedly prophesied in Lamb’s church that the “calling” or conversion of the Jews was near, something which Mistress Hutchinson later proclaimed to her own conventicle in New England.¹⁰² If Baillie is to be believed, Attaway also shared John Eaton’s beliefs in salvation through free justification and the personal union between the Holy Spirit and the believer, another teaching that would exert a profound influence over Anne Hutchinson. While not a mechanic preacher, John Eaton, the curator of St. Catherine’s Church in Coleman Street, drew the attention of heresiographers with his pamphlet, *The Honeycombe of Free Justification by Christ Alone*, which, in line with the convictions of Barber and Hutchinson, extolled lay preaching, the personal union between God and the believer, and the belief that church ordinances were antichristian yokes.¹⁰³

In the context of this swirling world of religious radicalism, How’s 1638 sermon on Coleman Street drew great public attention to the subversive undercurrents sweeping through London’s sectarian meetinghouses. This produced a clerical backlash in print and pulpit calculated to stem the growing popularity of extra-parochial church organization.¹⁰⁴ As Perry Miller wrote, “Just as soon as the radical fringe of their party, the antinomian sects and the hot-gospelling enthusiasts, took the solid divines at their word and proceeded apace to deliver sermons which dispensed utterly with the ‘humane helps’ of grammar and rhetoric, orthodox puritans...rallied to defend these arts exactly as

¹⁰² Dailey, *Root and Branch*, 15.

¹⁰³ Miller, *New England Mind*, 303.

they upheld dialectic.”¹⁰⁵ As the rivers of ink spilled by the heresiographers like Thomas Edwards and Ephraim Pagitt clearly reveal, the sects inspired deep-seated fear among parochial godly and loyal church members alike that this method of turning the world upside down would not stop at the conventicle’s tavern door.¹⁰⁶ Although heresiographers often fabricated the doctrines of the sects and wrote luridly about the alleged libertinism of their members, the actual sermons of preachers like How and Barber do seem, to modern eyes, to undermine the very ideological foundations of the Stuart “cultural consensus,” which, to a degree, was an invention in and of itself. The deferential order that seventeenth-century elites from both court and godly parties subscribed to did exist, but it was by no means a cultural consensus, although these same elites *thought* that it *should* be. The fact that they spent so much time thinking about it suggests, of course, that it was being contested, although revisionist scholars seem to have mistaken these aspirations for social “consensus” (or control and submission) as a concrete historical reality.

Despite the internal tensions plaguing the godly enclave of Coleman Street Ward, sectarians and parochial congregants there shared a growing fear about the imperiled state of reformed religion in England, a fear that compelled several denizens to opt for a traditional militant Protestant response, exile. Coleman Street’s role in this initiative marked the extension of the theatre of reformation beyond Europe and into the greater Atlantic world. Before the Archbishop closed the books on the Feoffees of

¹⁰⁶ This fear of social revolution can be traced in almost every work written against the sects. Heresiography was political propaganda and satire, not theological disputation. See the following for a few clear examples: *Tub Preachers Overturned or Independency Overthrown* (London, 1647); *A Word to Fanatics, Puritans and Sectaries or New Preachers New Green the Felt Maker, Spencer the Horse Rubber, Quartermaine the Brewer’s Clerk* (London, 1641); Robert Baillie, *A Dissuasive* (London, 1647); R. Elyman, *The Hunting of the Fox or The Sectaries Dissected* (London, 1648).

Impropiation, prominent members of the ward's merchant and clerical community began pooling their influence and money in other ventures that combined godly religion and politics, ventures whose Atlantic scope revealed the diminishing faith English saints had in their nation's potential reformation. This venture became known as the Massachusetts Bay Company, the capital investment group responsible for financing, chartering, and ultimately "settling" the Massachusetts Bay Colony. St. Stephen's minister John Davenport, and parishioners Owen Roe, William Spurstowe, Nathaniel Eaton, Samuel Aldersely, Isaac Pennington, and the fabulously wealthy Sir Richard Saltonstall, all became leading investors in the Massachusetts Bay Company.¹⁰⁷ Davenport's interests in advancing the Protestant cause beyond England stretched back to a 1622 investment in the Virginia Company, and he and other Coleman Street residents also organized relief for the besieged Protestants of the Palatinate.¹⁰⁸ Aldersly and Saltonstall, residents of Swann Alley, were two of the original three founders of the Bay Colony, while ten of the colony's original thirty-three subscribers hailed from Coleman Street Ward.¹⁰⁹ The activities of the Coleman Street godly bear out an argument made by Burgess, that although most Englishmen before 1625 would have agreed that the King rightfully held absolute prerogative, it was becoming increasingly difficult for militant Protestants to accept that the King had exercised his prerogatives justly, especially through his courts. Exile, at least to the well-to-do organizers of the company, presented a third way; without explicitly rejecting the sovereignty of the King or communion with the church, they

¹⁰⁷ Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 310-312. Sharpe notes that the leadership of the Feoffees and the Massachusetts Bay Company virtually overlapped.

¹⁰⁸ Kirby, "Radicals of St. Stephen's," 101, 106; Calder, *New Haven Colony*, 34; Atwater, *History of the New Haven Colony*, 30.

¹⁰⁹ Kirby, "Radicals of St. Stephen's," 104.

would be free to pursue the “liberty” of their “conscience” to perfect their vision of a reformed commonwealth.¹¹⁰

From the outset, investors in the Bay Colony hoped that their colony would serve as a profitable plantation that would secure a safe haven for reformation and godly government, insulated from the increasingly harsh treatments Star Chamber and the Courts of High Commission dealt to godly dissidents.¹¹¹ A letter written by the Coleman Street merchant Isaac Pennington gives us a glimpse into how Stuart persecution fed dreams of removing to a godly commonwealth across the sea:

it is [not] safe to write of anything that passes, all the discourse is now of the great Star Chamber business, of which passages I know you shall have better information than I can give you: but this I can report for a truth thereof I am both an eye and an earwitness, these proceedings cause much dejection among many good and loyal subjects, make many fly and make many more think of providing for their safety in other places.¹¹²

The “Wilderness,” as the saints inaccurately called their new home, offered a refuge from persecution.¹¹³ It also provided, in their view, a blank template on which they might create a godly commonwealth.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Burgess, *Politics of the Ancient Constitution*, 109-138, 179-189.

¹¹¹ Miller, *New England Mind*, 432-462; Bercovitch, *Jeremiad*, 93-182; *Rites of Assent*, 34-167; Stephen Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* (New York: Norton, 1995); Darret B. Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston: A Portrait of a Puritan Town, 1630-1649* (New York: Norton, 1965)

¹¹² S.P. Dom. 16/363/120

¹¹³ New England was not the “howling wilderness and desert” made famous by New England apologists like Edward Johnson. See his *Wonder-Working Providence* (London, 1654), 44-47. Most of the land first settled consisted of planted fields and meadows cleared by the Pequot, Narragansett, and Wampanoag societies. All of New England's Indian groups had developed extensive agricultural societies before the arrival of Europeans, an often overlooked fact that Francis Jennings stressed in his ground-breaking book, *The Invasion of America* (New York: Norton, 1976), 58-85.

¹¹⁴ This perception of the “blank template” was, of course, from the settlers' perspective, which reflected the hubris of European colonization efforts across the world. See Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America*; James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Russell Bourne's *The Red King's Rebellion: Racial Politics in New England, 1675-1678* (New York: Atheneum, 1990) discusses the catastrophic effect European colonization had on Native American cultures in New England.

This would be accomplished through the establishment of a new, American church remodeled along the congregational order roughly outlined by the parishioners of St. Stephen's during the 1620s. Migrating saints saw the construction of their godly commonwealth as a bulwark against tyranny and a model for godly communities across the world. For many migrants, the apocalyptic purpose of their mission was literal and immediate, for others, it could be distant, far off and if pressed closely, perhaps figurative. But by "revealing new terrestrial places," the Great Migration opened the Anglo-Atlantic world -beyond its already considerable commercial network -to an original and creative historical force, voluntary mass migration from the old world and the colonization of the new. In contrast with the Chesapeake and West Indies colonies, populated largely by gentleman adventurers and young, single, male indentured servants and slaves, New England would be settled by godly families. In the eyes of the Bay Company organizers, the settlers were embarking upon a sacramental exodus as 'the saving remnant' of the English reformation. New England's saints understood that they were progressing through sacred time, ordained by providence to strike a new covenant with God that would transcend the mere vision of reform with a collective attempt to build a New World.¹¹⁵ By 1650, more than 20,000 English had migrated to New England.

Arriving in America in 1630, Massachusetts' first generation of industrious citizens busied themselves with building what John Winthrop, their first Governor, called "A City upon a Hill." After early setbacks with disease and food shortages, the colonists

¹¹⁵ Maclear, "Fifth Monarchy," 223-248; Zakai, *Exile*, 8, 207-210. Also see Zakai's article, "Puritan Millenarianism and Theocracy in Early Massachusetts," *History of European Ideas* 8 (1987), 309-318, for a good explanation of how millenarian thought helped give shape and form to the Bay Colony's political and religious institutions.

went to work to build this community. A meetinghouse for the First Church, along with a governor's mansion made of brick, sturdy wharves, warehouses, fortresses, a school building, grist mills, and hundreds of clapboard houses would soon spring up on the narrow neck of land called Shawmut. It would not be long before the settlers renamed their new home "Boston" after the East Anglian town from which many of them came. The majority of Massachusetts' first settlers hailed from the "middling sort" of English society: merchants, shop keepers, artisans, master tradesmen, and of course, yeoman farmers. Servants, as we will see, were in short supply. These godly citizens also engaged in what they hoped would become profitable enterprises revolving around the export of raw material (timber), agriculture (various foodstuffs), and manufacturing pursuits (mostly shipbuilding), that thanks to pre-existing commercial ties between the emigrants and the London merchant community, were integrated within a decade to the burgeoning Atlantic trade between Europe, Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean.¹¹⁶

After a turbulent period of growth and decline in the late 1630s, New England's economic fortunes brightened over the course of the next decade, fueled by both Indian conquest and colonial legal codes such as the Bay Colony's *Body of Liberties* (1641), which encouraged tax deferments, land grants, and short-term monopolies for the building of ironworks, fisheries, shipyards, lumber mills, salt works, and glass works.¹¹⁷ This foundation provided the legal infrastructure for economic growth. The growing fishing industry encouraged shipbuilding, which in turn sparked ancillary industries in

¹¹⁶ Margaret Ellen Newell, *From Dependency to Independence: Economic Revolution in Colonial New England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 38-40; Ziff, *Puritanism in America*, 80-90; Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston*, 177-193;

¹¹⁷ Stephen Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* (New York: Norton, 1995).

iron-smelting, rope-making, and the milling of lumber. Boston's political status as the Bay Colony capital, its growing population, and its location between godly settlements in Plymouth, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, along with its deep water harbor helped made the town New England's commercial center. The town also attracted many merchants eager to wed New England's agricultural and craft goods to the burgeoning Atlantic economy of the seventeenth century. As this trade grew, outfitting it made work for shipwrights, coopers, butchers, bakers, tanners, iron makers, and draymen. The town's shopkeepers looked forward to the arrival of ships from Europe and the Caribbean, twenty to twenty-five annually according to Darrett Rutman. These vessels unloaded their cargos of sugar, tobacco, textiles, manufactured goods, and Madeira wine in Boston. They also unloaded thirsty crewman and eager factors ready to engage in retail and wholesale trading. During their stay in town, these men would increase the profits of innkeepers, brewers, and victuallers.¹¹⁸

As they secured their economic base during the first decade, the Bay Colonists worked to establish the institutions of church and state that would guide the godly commonwealth. Within the first few years, the offices of governor and deputy governor were created, along with notary publics and "beadles" or tax collectors. Elections were held for the General Court of "assistants" or justices of the peace. By the middle of the

¹¹⁸ Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston*, 186-190; For the most valuable primary source relating to New England's early economic development within the wider Atlantic world, see William Aspinwall, *A Volume Relating to the Early History of Boston Containing the Aspinwall Notarial Records from 1644-1651*. (Boston: Municipal Printing Office, 1903). For secondary work on New England's colonial economy, see Margaret Ellen Newell, *From Dependency to Independence: Economic Revolution in Colonial New England*; Charles F. Carroll, *The Timber Economy of Puritan New England* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1974); Robert Tarule, *The Artisan of Ipswich: Craftsmanship and Community in Colonial New England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

decade, the court established a militia for the colony's defense, although as we will see, it would be employed for offensive purposes as well.¹¹⁹ As Boston grew and new towns spread throughout the colony, the need for local town as well as colony-wide government increased, and townsmen were either elected or appointed as surveyors, constables, notaries, and gaolers. Most freemen in the colony would serve on at least one jury during their lifetime.

In terms of the gathering of churches, the colonial government deferred this to the initiative of the saints. During the 1630s, the godly established congregations in the settlements that would become known as Salem, Cambridge (Newtown), Roxbury, Lynn, Scituate, Dorchester, and Boston. As early as 1638, a sizeable portion of St. Stephen's parish, under their former pastor, John Davenport, had emigrated to New England, where saints from London, East Anglia, Somerset, and Lancashire had been moving since John Winthrop's fleet arrived at Shawmut in 1630.¹²⁰ A group of spiritists from Lathrop's Southwark meeting came in 1634, though Samuel How would absorb those who stayed in his Coleman Street congregation. In perhaps Coleman Street's most significant contribution to the Bay Colony, and perhaps early American history, these churches would be organized according to the congregational model pioneered at St. Stephen's parish and the other gathered churches established through the efforts of the feoffeees. In New England, these congregations would experience, as never before, the impact of the unresolved tensions that had divided parochial and sectarian saints in Old England.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston*, 63, 166.

¹²⁰ David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 31-38; Calder, *New Haven Colony*, 34.

¹²¹ Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston*, 41-68, 98-135.

CHAPTER TWO

“COMBUSTIONS IN THE COMMONWEALTH”: LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE IN NEW ENGLAND, 1630-1638

“As sure as God is God, God is going from England.” So wrote the cleric Thomas Hooker as he and thousands of others began their dangerous journey “beyond the seas” to secure “liberty of conscience” in the “refuge...rock and shelter of ...New England.”¹ As the passengers sped toward America aboard *The Arbella*, their future governor John Winthrop made clear that the success of their sacred experiment depended upon the unity of the saints. “We must be knit together in this work as one man...always having before our eyes our... community as members of the same body.” This social unity could only be preserved if the saints replicated God’s natural hierarchy, where “as in all times some must be rich, some poor, some high and eminent in power and dignity; others mean and in submission.” But this was a hierarchy infused with a practical Christian ethos, where “the rich and mighty should not eat up the poor.”² “Man as he was enabled,” continued Winthrop, was “commanded to love his neighbor as himself...Upon this ground stands all the precepts of the moral law,” which required all men to “give beyond their ability.” “A community of perils” in the “wilderness” called “for extraordinary liberality.”³ In this commonwealth formed by “mutual consent” and “a special overvaluing providence...the care of the public must overweigh all private respects, by which, not only conscience, but mere civil policy, doth bind us. For it is a

¹ Thomas Hooker, “The Danger of Desertion,” in Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco, eds., *The Puritans in America: A Narrative Anthology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 68-69. Also quoted in Hill, *English Bible*, 284.

² John Winthrop, *A Modell of Christian Charity* (1630), 1.

³ *Ibid.*, 2.

true rule that particular estates cannot subsist in the ruin of the public.”⁴ If the saints pursued this reformation with sincere hearts, Winthrop believed that God would

make us a praise and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantations: the lord make it like that of New England: for we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.⁵

Drawing on his experience as the godly lord of Groton Manor in Suffolk, Winthrop felt that the community of saints depended upon preserving traditional deference.⁶ “Those in subjection” would be “commanded to obedience” in New England as they had been in Old England; reformation did not entail social re-ordering, especially through radical spiritism. The saints in subjection could not be tempted to “rise up against and shake off their yoke” under the false pretense that they were liberating themselves from another form of corrupt authority, namely their ministers, magistrates, masters, and husbands.⁷ Practical Christianity in America would thus preserve communal unity and godly authority in a providentially ordained, hierarchical, and patriarchal society.⁸

Like Winthrop, the Reverend John Wheelwright left England to advance the Reformation in America. He soon discovered that his antinomianism conflicted with how Winthrop and most of the Bay Colony clergy conceived of godly doctrine, order, and unity in the fledgling community. This presented both a challenge and an opportunity for Wheelwright, since most of the members of Boston’s First Church came to New England with beliefs that tended toward antinomianism. Before Wheelwright’s

⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁶ Lee Schweninger, *John Winthrop* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), 27-29; Richard Archer, *Fissures in the Rock: New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2001), 28.

⁷ Winthrop, *Modell*, 3.

⁸ For more on Winthrop’s practical Christianity, see Francis Bremer, *John Winthrop: America’s Forgotten Founding Father* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 173-184.

arrival, however, his sister-in-law, Anne Hutchinson, had become a fierce critic of the Bay Colony clergy. She had managed to attract many prominent Bostonians to her private conventicle, including the young governor, Henry Vane. But Anne was as divisive as she was compelling, and her outspoken preaching turned other powerful men among the clergy and magistracy against her. With conflict gripping the community, the General Court declared a communal fast for January 13, 1637, so that the saints could search their hearts for the roots of the present discord.⁹

Preaching that day in the First Church of Boston, Wheelwright quickly condemned his clerical opponents for embracing a “covenant of works” and counted them among “the greatest enemies of Christ.” He warned the Hutchinsonians to “prepare for spiritual combat...between the upright and the degenerate” in the coming Armageddon.¹⁰ Wheelwright acknowledged that his words would “cause a combustion in the church and commonwealth.” Nonetheless, he encouraged the saints. “Never fear combustions and burnings...Christ will purge his floor, layeth the axe to the root, and cutteth down all hypocrites and those that build anything besides Christ...he will purge the church.”¹¹ The ministers and magistrates understood the point of the sermon clearly: Wheelwright had proclaimed them apostates, who as such, forfeited their sovereign authority within the church and court. Later in the chapter, we will meet Wheelwright again as he stood before Winthrop and the General Court on charges of sedition.

The Fast Day Sermon offers a vivid glimpse into the fragmentation of the godly community in America and raises a vital question upon which this chapter will focus. Would saints united in the search for reformation but conflicted over the character of

⁹ David D. Hall, “Introduction,” in Hall, ed., *The Antinomian Controversy*, 6-7.

¹⁰ John Wheelwright, “Fast Day Sermon,” in Hall, ed., *The Antinomian Controversy*, 165.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 165-166.

sound doctrine allow civil magistrates to enforce religious conformity? This conflict came to a head in New England's most famous religious uproar, the Antinomian Controversy of 1636-1638, where Wheelwright, Anne Hutchinson, and Henry Vane would emerge as formidable foes of the religious policies of the General Court. In ways similar to the Coleman Street sectarians, the Hutchinsonian faction would challenge the authority of clerics and magistrates to determine the shape and direction of the godly community's struggle for reformation.

All saints held "liberty of conscience" in high regard, but the lack of consensus concerning toleration's proper latitude posed a difficult problem.¹² The Bay Colony Court and clergy drew a clear line when religious expression passed over into what they judged to be heresy, or when religious expression disrupted the civil peace and social cohesion of the community. In contrast, from the perspective of Hutchinson and her supporters, clerical monopolies of religious doctrine and magisterial authority in religious affairs represented a form of "outward bondage," one that fettered their "liberty of conscience" to worship outside the purview of church ordinances and the interference of civil magistrates.

But before the controversy inspired by Anne Hutchinson rocked New England, Roger Williams had challenged the civil magistrates' right to restrict liberty of conscience. Williams' ordeal, like Hutchinson's, has figured prominently within

¹² Foster, *Long Argument*, 177; "English Puritanism and the Progress of New England Institutions, 1630-1660," in David D. Hall, John Murrin, and Thad Tate, eds., *Saints and Revolutionaries: Essays on Early American History* (New York: Norton, 1984), 3-38. For the most complete discussion of toleration in Old and New England, see Philip Gura's chapter in *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory* entitled, "Toleration: The Great Controversial Business of these Polemick Times," 185-215.

American “puritan” studies.¹³ But the ways in which Williams purposefully linked his plea for tolerance with the defense of Native American rights in both Old and New England has received much less attention. This will not suffice, because as this chapter will argue, the radical quest for liberty of conscience in New England began by Roger Williams unfolded within the context of his opposition to magisterial claims over Native American civil and spiritual liberties.

After studying law under Edward Coke and serving as a clerk in the Court of Star Chamber, the Cambridge-educated Williams left a promising career in England because he could not conform to the doctrine and rituals of the Church of England.¹⁴ Its corruption for Williams imperiled the spiritual state of the saint, whereas America seemed to offer an unparalleled opportunity to restore the church to its primitive purity, leaving the believer free from popish doctrine and prelatic persecution. Coming to Boston in 1630, he was disappointed to find that the saints who had crossed the Atlantic with the Winthrop fleet retained a tenuous, ill-defined connection with the English church.¹⁵ Williams rejected an offer from the Boston congregation to minister there because he considered the members’ non-separating position as an impure compromise with an antichristian institution. Only complete separation would do, and he publicly aired these views in Boston, which strained his relationship with Governor Winthrop and pastor John Wilson.¹⁶

¹³ Major works on Williams include: Hugh Spurgin, *Roger Williams and Puritan Radicalism in the English Separatist Tradition* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989); L. Raymond Camp, *Roger Williams: God’s Apostle of Advocacy* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989); Perry Miller, *Roger Williams: His Contribution to the American Tradition* (New York: Bobs-Merril, 1953); Edmund Morgan, *Roger Williams: The Church and the State* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967).

¹⁴ Camp, *Roger Williams*, 24-44, 66-112; Morgan, *Roger Williams*, 18-27.

¹⁵ Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 40; James Savage, ed., *The History of New England from 1630-1649 by John Winthrop, Esq* (Boston: Phelps and Farnham, 1825), 1: 41. (cited hereafter as *Winthrop’s Journal*)

¹⁶ Ziff, *Puritanism in America*, 102; *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 53.

Following a brief period of peace in his next home, Plymouth Colony, Williams soon made an enemy of pastor Ralph Smith and Governor William Bradford, both of whom found that his preaching on free grace tended toward heretical “anabaptism.”¹⁷ Williams left Plymouth and settled in the Bay Colony town of Salem. There he felt more welcome, as his preaching resonated with a community composed largely of separatist Calvinists. In Salem, Williams found one of his few clerical allies in New England, the Reverend Samuel Skelton, who shared Williams’ support for lay preaching and prophesying.¹⁸ As a celebrated institution of the primitive church, prophecy appealed to many American saints who wished to incorporate it as a sanctioned devotional practice within their gathered congregations.¹⁹ The Bay Colony’s ministers were more skeptical, thinking that lay prophecy had outlived its usefulness. In their view, congregants in New as opposed to Old England would not have to exercise emergency powers against suspect clergy since men of the cloth in the Bay Colony had been chosen by their churches.

Williams’ troubles, however, did not end after his move to Salem. His religious views soon stretched the boundaries of proper doctrine and devotional practice favored by the Bay Colony court and clerisy. He continued to proclaim the necessity of separation, which further alienated him from his fellow clerics and the General Court. Sovereign religious authority, as well as civil government, according to Williams, originated through the consent of those who entered into religious or civil compacts. Thus, the privately gathered Salem church jealously guarded its independence from the growing power of the Boston congregation. As separatists, they had not entered into

¹⁷ Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 40; William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647*, Samuel Elliot Morrison, ed., (New York: Knopf, 1953), 256-258.

¹⁸ Rutman, *Winthrop’s Boston*, 99-100; Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 40; *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 164.

¹⁹ Morgan, *Williams*, 21, 41, 50-51; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 50-66; Patrick Collinson, “The English Conventicle,” 223-59.

ecclesiastical communion with other churches, and therefore felt that the court and clergy of the colony had no godly or legal title to religious jurisdiction within their settlement. Moreover, Williams believed that the sovereignty of church and civil government continued to rest on the active consent of its members. Church members did not compact with civil magistrates in the formation of their congregations, and therefore should be free to govern themselves according to their consciences. In another departure from the General Court, Williams objected to the practice of disenfranchising non-church members from civil equality and political participation. Although a fierce Calvinist, Williams believed that the awards of election were to be enjoyed in the hereafter, not to be used as discriminating qualifications between men in the civil sphere or for regulating them in matters of worship through the courts.²⁰ Thus, Williams' religious disputes with other ministers passed easily into the sphere of political confrontation with the General Court.

Perhaps even more controversially, Williams' supplemented his denial of the General Court's religious authority with a comprehensive challenge to the constitutional legitimacy of the Plymouth and Bay Colonies. Williams denied both the Royal and providential authority that each colonial government used to proclaim their jurisdiction over the local Pequot, Wampanoag, and Naraggansett Indians.²¹ This argument stemmed from both Williams' religious convictions and his tutelage under the famous jurist and MP, Sir Edward Coke, author of twelve volumes of reports on English court cases as well as the classic legal text, *Institutes of the Laws of England*. Williams regarded Coke as a

²⁰ Winthrop's *Journal*, 1: 53, 117 ; Morgan, *Williams*, 86-114; Ziff, *Puritanism in America*, 100-102; Miller, *New England Mind*, 420.

²¹ Winthrop's *Journal*, 1: 110, 151, 162, 163; Selma Williams, *Kings, Commoners, and Colonists: Puritan Politics in Old and New England* (New York: Atheneum, 1974), 122-116.

“father,” and indeed while serving as Chief Justice on the King’s Bench, the eminent judge employed Williams as a court recorder, and later sponsored his protégé’s entrance into Pembroke College, Cambridge. Williams’ challenge to the Bay Colony patent echoed the thought of his master, who held that governments could only be sovereign if subjects had, at some point in history, given their consent to the laws by which they would be ruled.²² According to Williams’ understanding of the ancient constitution, new governments such as the Bay Colony could not legitimately employ a royal patent to claim sovereignty over Indians who had not voluntarily subjected themselves to the King’s authority. Outside the secular tradition of English political and legal thought, Williams argued as a fierce Calvinist that spiritual election did not give the saints the godly privilege to usurp the natural rights Indians held to retain control of their own country. If election were used as a criterion for sovereignty, the mass of unregenerate men of all races could be supplanted by alien powers and left destitute and without the protection of legitimately constituted government.²³

Underlying this vision of commonwealth justice was an even more powerful belief that Christians had a special duty to imitate Christ’s example of selfless love. All of the godly professed some form of practical Christianity, but Williams used it in a radical fashion, to reject Winthrop and the Bay Colony’s self-professed providential

²² Weston and Greenberg, *Subjects and Sovereigns*, 128-130; Greenberg, *Radical Face of the Ancient Constitution*, 117; Garrett, *Roger Williams*, 72-80, 193-199. Williams’ clearly felt an enormous personal and intellectual debt to Coke, as an excerpt of a letter written to his former master’s daughter, Anne Sadlier, reveals: “How many thousand times since have I had honourable and precious remembrance of his person, and the life, the writings, the speeches, and the examples of that glorious light. And I may truly say that beside my natural inclination to study and activity, his example, instruction, and encouragement, have spurred me on to a more than ordinary, industrious and patient course in my whole course hitherto.” For this quote, see Garrett, *Roger Williams*, 75.

²³Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution* (London, 1644) in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 283-284; Ziff, *Puritanism in America*, 100-102; *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 122, 151; Spurgin, *Roger Williams*, 26-28; Miller, *Roger Williams*, 93.

claims of authority over their Native American neighbors. Williams rejected this as a violation of the lawful rights of innocents, who had offended neither God nor man. All mankind, according to Williams, were “of one blood.” “Nature knows no difference between *Europe* and *Americans* in blood, birth, bodies,” and therefore, in the temporal world, preserving the public good depended upon the common law’s non-particular and universal application. Since they were the common creation of God who had endowed them, regardless of culture and complexion, with the same natural parts and mental faculties, natives as well as settlers could expect justice under the laws of God and England.²⁴ No man, no court, and no King could claim any power over his fellow creatures if it denied or contradicted this fundamental principle upon which the moral law of Christ and the justice of the common law rested.²⁵

Williams’ radically egalitarian view of the common law reflected the fundamental difference that existed between his respect for his Indian neighbors and the disregard in which the governors of Plymouth and Massachusetts held them. They seemed to revel in the destruction of the Indians as God’s blessing upon their colonial enterprise. Plymouth governor Edward Winslow’s account vividly conveys the toll European pathogens such as small pox took on New England’s Indian peoples:

Their disease being a sore consumption, sweeping away whole families, but chiefly young men and children, the very seeds of increase...they were much amazed to see their wigwams lie full of dead corpses...howling and much lamentation was heard among the living, who being possessed of great fear, oftentimes left their dead unburied.²⁶

²⁴ Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America* (London, 1643), 53.

²⁵ Camp, *Roger Williams*, 126.

²⁶ Edward Johnson, *Johnson’s Wonder-working Providence, 1628-1651*, in Franklin Jameson, ed., (London, 1654; New York, 1910), 40-41.

Contrary to the tone of respect one might expect to follow this description, the colonist Edward Johnson rejoiced after reading Winslow's passage:

But by this means Christ (whose great and glorious works the Earth throughout are altogether for the benefit of his churches and chosen) not only made room for his people to plant, but also tamed the hard and cruel hearts of those barbarous Indians.²⁷

Here, Native American small pox epidemics were taken as providential blessings for the "errand into the wilderness," where the deaths of "barbarians" signaled the beginning of a new American era where saints would be free to pursue their colonial projects. John Winthrop looked on the massive death toll as if God had signed the Bay Colony charter in the blood of dead natives, writing that through the plague, "God hath hearby cleared our title to this place." Later, Cotton Mather would write that the epidemics, through the grace of Christ, justified the colonists' right to claim "absolute empire" over the natives.²⁸

The conquest of Native Americans, however, offered a more direct route to a "cleared title" for colonial expansion. Winthrop and Winslow justified their respective, and sometimes joint conquests of local Native American societies as wars of self-defense. There was a measure of truth in these claims, for at different points in time, both the Pequots and the Naraggansetts would resolve to destroy English power in New England. Indians also used temporary alliances with the English to fend off tribes with whom they differed. But what colonial assertions of self-defense obscured were the offensive territorial ambitions of settlers that put Indian neighbors on a defensive military footing to protect their diminishing opportunities for farming and trade. The English asserted, to the dismay of native peoples, that their treaties placed them under the permanent civil

²⁷ Ibid., 40-41.

²⁸ Ronald Takaki, "The Tempest in the Wilderness: The Racialization of Savagery," *The Journal of American History* 79 (1992), 908, 911.

jurisdiction and economic clientage of the colonists. When colonists pressed these claims to justify territorial expansion, they threatened the economic viability of Indian societies and made armed conflict more likely. Both the saints and the Indians pursued war as a matter of economic necessity, with the key difference being that colonists sought to perpetually maximize the profitability of ever-expanding territory while natives struggled to preserve their customary rights in the land.

Plymouth Colony's war against the Wessagussets people offers a clear example of this conflict.²⁹ Already in debt two years into its existence, Plymouth saw opportunities for profit in the local fur-trade, although an English company already claimed trading rights with the Wessagussets. In 1622, Captain Miles Standish, the iconic figure immortalized in Pilgrim lore for his bold proposal to Priscilla Alden, led a party of Plymouth militia to "protect" the fur traders against the "threat" the local Wessagussets posed to the company. The fur traders, led by Thomas Weston, protested that they did not desire protection and lived and traded peaceably among the Indians, although that soon ended when Captain Standish massacred a party of Wessagussets. Standish brought the sachem Witawamut's head back to Plymouth, spiking it atop the village gate as a grisly declaration of terror to visiting Indians who might collide with Plymouth's economic designs.³⁰ This calculated bloodletting intentionally increased the tension between the English and indigenous people. Plymouth Colony then used this as a

²⁹ David Bushnell, "The Treatment of the Indians in Plymouth Colony," in Alden Vaughan, ed., *New England Encounters: Indians and Euroamericans, ca.1600-1850* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999), 59-83. I take issue with Bushnell's conceptualization of Plymouth's expansion into Wessagusset territory as a "natural consequence of economic forces." (62) Although Bushnell believes the Wessagussets were treated unfairly, calling Plymouth's seizure of Indian land "natural" elevates the profit motive to a condition rooted in the biological make-up of humans. Native Americans, unlike the English, had no concept of private property concerning the land, and in their economic culture, possessed nothing similar to the European construct of profit. These are rather large holes in Bushnell's argument.

³⁰ Michael Leroy Oberg, *Dominion and Civility: English Imperialism and Native America, 1585-1685* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 92.

pretext to “defend” the local fur trade through further pre-emptive massacres of the Wessagussets. These campaigns eventually pushed aside Weston’s group, and Plymouth settlers soon came to monopolize the area’s fur trade.³¹

This is hardly surprising when one recognizes that the primary motivation for conquests of indigenous peoples centered on colonialism’s first economic priority, territorial expansion for trade and settlement. This ameliorated land hunger and increased profit-making opportunities, especially for the colonial elite who had invested the most and therefore stood the most to lose should their American enterprise fail. In the rapidly expanding Atlantic economy of the seventeenth century, colonial architects recognized that respecting Native American rights obstructed the realization of New England’s economic potential.

As Edward Johnson described it, gain was “the first working of providence” in New England, which would “stir up our English nation to plant these parts in the hope of a rich trade.”³² Although Plymouth, Massachusetts, New Haven, and the other Connecticut colonies signed scores of land treaties with neighboring tribes that increased their holdings, the growing settler population predictably increased the demand for greater and greater territorial expansion.³³ This helped to render old treaties as economic fetters rather than guarantees of secure Indian-colonist relations. Johnson, who later led a Massachusetts militia attack against his Narragansett neighbors in 1643 noted the “war-like discipline” of “the people of Christ,” and reflecting on the massive deaths of local

³¹ Bushnell, “Indians in Plymouth Colony,” 61; Oberg, “Dominion and Civility,” 98; Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (New York: Norton, 1975), 186-187; George Willison, *Saints and Strangers* (New York, 1945), Chapter 15.

³² Edward Johnson, *Johnson’s Wonder-Working Providence* (London, 1654), Franklin Jameson, ed., (New York, 1910), 40.

³³ Vaughan, “Introduction,” in Vaughan, ed., *New England Encounters*, 10, 11, 19-24; Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 133-136, 319-321.

Indians due to disease and war, rejoiced in the “wilderness work” of turning the American “desart” into “Christ’s Vineyard.” “Behold the worthies of Christ,” Johnson wrote, “as they are boldly leading forth his troops into these western fields.”³⁴ These men waged a militant Protestant war on dual fronts of conquest: against Anti-christ and his European minions who obstructed godly reform, and the savage, American wilderness, teeming with heathens whose very idleness squandered the wealth that might be generated “for the glory of God.”³⁵ On this second front, the enclosure of the American commons entailed the conquest and expropriation of its native peoples, whose organizing economic principle rested on the use value of the land rather than the accumulation of private property for profit.

Roger Williams, in reaction to this imperial view of reformation, drew the strikingly unconventional conclusion that far from subduing diabolical forces, Indian wars of conquest actually originated from a satanic spirit within the godly community. Dismissing the providential justification for these conflicts, Williams recognized that the lust for land had become a false idol that afflicted the Bay Colonists with a “depraved appetite after the great vanities, dreams and shadows of this vanishing life, great portions of land, land in this wilderness, as if men were in a great necessity and danger for want of great portions of land, as poor, hungry, thirsty seamen have, after a sick and stormy, a long and starving passage.”³⁶ Unlike in Old England, where landlords dispossessed fellow Christians, land expropriation in America could find moral legitimacy by drawing upon traditional Christian prejudice against “pagans.” This in turn bred an intense racism

³⁴ Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 44.

³⁵ Oberg, *Dominion and Civility*, 80-112; Vaughan, “Introduction,” in Vaughan, ed., *New England Encounters*, 15-16; John McWilliams, “Indian John and the Northern Tawnies,” in Vaughan, ed., *New England Encounters*, 156-178.

³⁶ John Bartlett, ed., *The Letters of Roger Williams, 1632-1682* (Providence, 1874), 6: 342.

that construed Indian culture as the demonic life ways of a naturally degenerate people.³⁷ Native rights to land were thus made forfeit as saints reconstructed Indian culture into a satanic “other.”

We will see later in the chapter how Williams came to see New England’s bloodiest Indian conquest, The Pequot War (1636-38), as an antichristian conflict. But for our purposes here, it is enough to know that this experience stiffened his resolve to prevent further atrocities. Later in 1654, he tried in vain to prevent Massachusetts from launching a war of conquest against the Narragansetts tribe, “I beseech you consider how the name of the most holy and jealous God may be preserved between the clashings of these two: viz: the glorious conversion of the Indians in New England and the unnecessary wars and cruel destruction of the Indians in New England.”³⁸ Land hunger, as Williams recognized, was “one of the gods of New England, which the living and most high Eternal will destroy and famish.”³⁹ Not only did it destroy lives in the pursuit of “filthy lucre,” it obstructed one of the godly’s most publicized, and from Williams’ view, most important colonial objectives: the Christian conversion of New England’s Indians. Wars of conquest in pursuit of Indian land, according to Williams, made a hypocritical mockery of the “errand into the wilderness.”

This context is important to recognize, because Williams’ radical conceptualization of white–Native American relations did not stem from abstract

³⁷ Takaki, “Tempest in the Wilderness,” 904- 912; William Simmons, “Cultural Bias in the New England Puritans Perception of Indians,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 38 (1981), 62, 70; Alfred Cave, “Why was the Sagadahoc Colony Abandoned? An Evaluation of the Evidence,” in Vaughan, ed., *New England Encounters*, 47-50.

³⁸ Glenn LaFantasie, ed., *The Correspondence of Roger Williams* (Hanover, 1988), 2:410; Quoted in Keith Stavely, “Roger Williams and the Enclosed Gardens of New England,” in Bremer, ed., *Puritanism: Trans-Atlantic Perspectives*, 269.

³⁹ Bartlett, ed., *Letters of Roger Williams*, 7: 342; Quoted in Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 181.

philosophical engagements with the concept of natural equality. Williams' developed his views while living beside Native Americans during a period of intense colonial territorial expansion that reduced the potential for harmony between colonists and Indians to a relationship defined mostly through violence. Reacting to this violence, he refused to condone the bloodshed because he saw land hunger as a false idol, and because he rejected the prevailing attitude that Native Americans were naturally inferior to whites. In contrast, John Eliot, the famous Bay Colony missionary, describing the alleged natural deficiencies of native Americans, wrote that their "souls feed upon nothing but lust and lying, and stealing and killing...and all these are sins which poison, starve, and kill your souls, and expose them to God's wrath that they may be tormented by Devils."⁴⁰ "The devil was in them," wrote Captain Edward Johnson of New England's Indians, because they "could work strange things with the help of Satan."⁴¹ It should not be surprising that during the Salem Witch Trials, the devil often appeared to anguished witnesses in the shape of an Indian.⁴² God would deliver his wrath on the Indian Satan through his chosen instruments in America, the English godly, who would purge the dark wilderness of its evil spirits. Williams criticized these views in a piece of poetic advice to his fellow colonists,

Boast not proud English, of thy birth & blood,
Thy brother Indian is by birth as Good.
Of one blood God made Him and Thee & All,
As wise, as fair, as strong, as personal.⁴³

⁴⁰ Henry Bowden and James P. Ronda, eds., *John Eliot's Indian Dialogues: A Study in Cultural Interaction* (Westport, 1980), 85.

⁴¹ Alfred Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 152.

⁴² John McWilliams, "Indian John and the Northern Tawnies," in Vaughan, ed., *New England Encounters*, 156-178.

⁴³ Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America* (London, 1643), John J. Teunissen and Evelyn J. Hinz, eds., (Detroit, 1973), 53.

Williams thus bore critical witness to a pivotal cultural development that marked European colonial projects around the Atlantic world during the seventeenth century, a process that the cultural historian Ronald Takaki has called the “racialization of savagery.”⁴⁴

Although Williams preached his controversial gospel to his Salem congregation, he also communicated his criticisms directly to Winthrop in what would become a voluminous correspondence. This subsequently occasioned a controversy in Boston in 1633. Williams ended the fiasco by apologizing for the unrest that he had caused, although he remained steadfast in the rectitude of his position. This course of action ultimately led to his censure by the Boston court in 1634.⁴⁵ Far from expressing outrage at their ministers’ radical position in favor of the Indians, Williams’ Salem church elected him pastor after the death of Samuel Skelton.⁴⁶ This act of defiance to Williams’ censure constituted a direct, popular challenge to the General Court’s authority in Salem, and perhaps to its treatment of neighboring Indians.⁴⁷

While Williams carried the English settler’s typical Eurocentric prejudices, specifically that conversion to Christianity would provide greater enlightenment for Native Americans, he also compared several aspects of their culture favorably to his own. Importantly, as Perry Miller has written, Williams never romanticized a “noble savage”

⁴⁴ Francis Jennings also advanced this argument in *The Invasion of America*, while Alden Vaughan and Daniel Richter reject that colonists racially essentialized what they perceived to be the deficiencies of Native American society. See Vaughan and Richter’s, “Crossing the Cultural Divide: Indians and New Englanders, 1605-1763,” in Alden Vaughan, ed., *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 213-248. For the best treatment of Williams’ views concerning Native Americans, see Donald Grinde and Bruce Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty: Native America and the Evolution of Democracy* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 73-91.

⁴⁵ *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 122.

⁴⁶ Camp, *Roger Williams*, 128.

⁴⁷ Shurtleff, ed., *Records of Massachusetts*, 1: 161; Alden Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675*, 3rd Edition (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 26, 36-37, 43-44.

image of the Indians. He criticized the violent aspects of Native American culture that he witnessed, writing of cannibalism, the “false and treacherous” way they fought, and that Indians could be “barbarous men of blood, who are as justly to be repelled as and subdued as wolves that assault sheep.”⁴⁸ But he also described the generosity Indians displayed toward strangers and those in need as an object lesson in Christian love. They were “remarkably free and courteous, to invite all strangers in...a man shall generally find more free entertainment amongst these Barbarians, then amongst thousands that call themselves Christians.”⁴⁹

Through Williams’ initial challenge to the Bay Colony to treat equitably with the Narragansett and Pequot tribes, the radical mantra that “God is no respecter of persons,” which deconstructed class-based inequalities on Coleman Street Ward, was now being employed in America to critique both the expropriation of native American land and the racial attitudes that were quickly taking shape to legitimize this process. Without understanding Indian culture to achieve harmonious, Christ-like co-existence with them, and without “compounding with the natives” to establish equitable relations in the civil sphere, Williams taught that Christians in the New World were dooming themselves to another variant of the antichristian corruption from which they had fled in Old England.⁵⁰ He echoed Winthrop in maintaining that Christ commanded his followers to love their neighbors as they loved themselves. But Williams extended the golden rule to Indians as

⁴⁸ Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America* (Boston: Collections of the Massachusetts Society, 1810), 210; Miller, *Williams*, 59.

⁴⁹ Jack L. Davis, “Roger Williams among the Narragansett Indians,” *New England Quarterly* 43 (1970), 593-604; Staveland, “Enclosed Gardens,” in Bremer, ed., *Puritanism: Trans-Atlantic Perspectives*, 270-275; Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*, Teunissen and Hinz, eds., 97-104, 203; Comparing the blood-soaked continental wars of religion to Indian battles, he found Indian combat “much less bloody than the cruel wars of Europe.” (204).

⁵⁰ *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 122.

well. To deprive anyone of their birthright in the name of Christ was inherently wrong, and a usurpation of the rights and privileges that all men could claim in nature.⁵¹

During the summer of 1635, in an astonishing conceptual link between liberty of conscience, popular sovereignty, and the rights of non-Christians, Williams blasted the Boston church for its conformity with the Church of England, affirmed the justice of separation, condemned the General Court for its interference in religious worship, and denied the legitimacy of the Bay Colony patent to govern the natives without their consent.⁵² Magistrates, Williams wrote, could not claim jurisdiction over matters of religious practice outlined in the Ten Commandments; this amounted to a violation of liberty of conscience.⁵³ Neither the King's grant, nor any other law entitled magistrates to this power. Claiming possession of Indian lands, according to Williams, was a "National sin;" renouncing it was a "National duty."⁵⁴ Here, Williams mixed separatist "heresy" with a condemnation of territorial expansion, the state's economic lifeblood. In America, well before the challenge the Levellers would pose to Oliver Cromwell, Roger Williams combined religious radicalism, constitutional arguments, and natural law theory in a form so potent that it raised fundamental and dangerous questions, not easily dismissed, about the legitimacy of civil and religious authority in a reformed commonwealth. In the process, he unsettled "The New England Mind" as to whether the violent conquest of "heathens," as a means to material "increase," reflected the glory of God or the greed of men.

⁵¹ Ziff, *Puritanism in America*, 100-102; Roger Williams, *Complete Writings* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), 5: 294; Grinde and Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty*, 84.

⁵² *Winthrop's Journal*, 1: 151.

⁵³ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 39-43; Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 139-140.

⁵⁴ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 142; Roger Williams, *Mr. Cotton's Letter Lately Printed, Examined, and Answered* (Providence: Narragansett Club Publications, 1866), 324-325.

The General Court found that it could not stomach such impudence, viewing Williams as the same sort of dangerous enthusiast who might haunt the alleys and taverns of Coleman Street.⁵⁵ In October 1635, the magistrates banished Williams from the Bay Colony upon pain of death if he returned. The court decided that he was too dangerous to be left to his own devices in America, and in December the magistrates hatched a plan to ship him back to England.⁵⁶ John Winthrop, in a true display of Christian charity, warned Williams of his impending arrest.⁵⁷ The two, despite their deep differences, would remain friendly correspondents until Winthrop's death in 1649, indicating how assiduously Winthrop endeavored to keep the "perfect bond of love" intact with even a man who threatened the unity of his commonwealth. He would not, however, extend the same kindnesses to female dissenters, as the case of Anne Hutchinson will reveal. But with Winthrop's help, Williams left for the Narragansett country, walking ninety miles in a driving blizzard that nearly killed him. According to his own account, he survived only through the many kindnesses shown him by the Narragansett Indians and their sachem, Massasoit.⁵⁸ Safely out of the Bay Colony patent, the Narragansetts allowed Williams to settle on their land. There, the minister began a lifelong labor of love, translating the Narragansett language into English.⁵⁹

While the Williams' controversy proved traumatic for the Bay Colony, this turbulence paled in comparison to that caused by Anne Hutchinson and her many followers. The popularity of Hutchinson's teachings may be gauged by Winthrop's

⁵⁵ Delbanco, *Puritan Ordeal*, 100-101.

⁵⁶ Garrett, *Roger Williams*, 17-18.

⁵⁷ Bremer, *Winthrop*, 251.

⁵⁸ Grinde and Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty*, 76.

⁵⁹ *Winthrop's Journal*, 1: 171, 175; Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 199; Schweninger, *John Winthrop*, 100-101; John Palfrey, *History of New England* (New York: AMS Press, 1966), 2: 410-422.

despairing remark, noted in court records, that her supporters made up the majority of Boston's First Church.⁶⁰ Interestingly, the colony's ordeal with the Hutchinsonians culminated at precisely the same time that the London clergy felt the brunt of Samuel How's lay challenge. The court and clergy in Massachusetts found themselves on the defensive because the colonial laity clung tenaciously to institutions like the conventicle and lay prophecy which challenged clerical control of the pulpit and magisterial regulation of religious belief. Moreover, like How's assembly at *The Nag's Head*, Hutchinson and her followers put obedience to the higher law of the Scriptures, as revealed by the Holy Spirit, before "human learning" and deference to social rank, gendered authority, and traditionally constituted power in the church and court.⁶¹

The trouble erupted in Boston in 1636 when a group of spiritists, mostly women, began meeting privately in the home of Anne Hutchinson to discuss the bi-weekly sermons of Bay Colony ministers.⁶² Winthrop described Hutchinson as "a woman of a haughty and fierce carriage, of a nimble wit and active spirit, and a very voluble tongue, more bold than a man."⁶³ Her father, Francis Marbury, a minister who held livings in Lincolnshire and London, first introduced young Anne to critiques of contemporary ritual and doctrine. Marrying the godly, well-to-do merchant William Hutchinson, the couple settled in the Lincolnshire town of Alford, where she bore eleven children. Her skill as a

⁶⁰ Winthrop's *Journal*, 1: 212.

⁶¹ For a review on scholarship concerning the Antinomian Controversy, see David D. Hall, "Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy on Trial: A Review Essay," *Harvard Theological Review* 95 (2002), 437.

⁶² David Hall, "Introduction," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 5-6; Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 241-245; Everett Emerson, *John Cotton* (Boston: Twayne Publishing, 1990), 87; Foster, *The Long Argument*, 628-630.

⁶³ John Winthrop, "A Short Story of the Rise, Reign and Ruin of the Antinomians, Familists, and Libertines," (London, 1644) in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 263.

midwife earned her the respect and trust of local families, as did her love of the plain-style of free grace preaching in an area that contained a high concentration of the saints.⁶⁴

While in Lincolnshire, Hutchinson became a devoted disciple of John Cotton, the pastor of St. Botolph's Church in nearby Boston, whose teachings on free grace both inspired her own piety and instilled within her a deep distrust of ministers whom she felt equivocated on the doctrine. But despite her later protestations, Hutchinson's devotion to free grace went beyond Cotton's teachings, and resembled more closely what Coleman Street radicals held concerning the *personal* union between the Holy Spirit and the believer.⁶⁵ It is also possible that she secretly attended separatist meetings while living in London as a teenager. Perhaps she ventured to Coleman Street during the time she spent in London before sailing for New England in 1634. We do know for certain that two other famous prophetesses called Lincolnshire home, the mysterious "Woman of Ely," whom heresiographers tracked dubiously to Coleman Street, and Jane Hawkins, who would later join Anne as a midwife in New England.⁶⁶ Both women shared Hutchinson's passion for prophecy, her distrust of ordained ministers, and her militant views on free grace.

Mrs. Hutchinson's deep piety, magnetic charisma and high social status made her a respectable figure in Boston, but as Rebecca Tannenbaum has recently recognized, she first acquired a faithful following through her travels and travails as a midwife. Anne combined her skills as a medical practitioner, healer, and prophetess to cultivate deep bonds of trust and affection with the women she served. As a midwife, she mended the

⁶⁴ Battis, *Saints and Sectaries*, 10-15; Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 42-50.

⁶⁵ Sargent Bush, "Revising What We Have Done Amiss," *William and Mary Quarterly* 45 (1988), 738.

⁶⁶ Holstun, *Ehud's Dagger*, 260; *Winthrop's Journal*, 1: 261-263; Dorothy Ludlow, "Arise and Be Doing: English Preaching Women, 1640-1660," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1978).

body through medicine and healed the soul by preaching on the comforts of free grace. The women of Boston knew Anne as a friend, confidant, doctress, and preacher, and as the network of her female supporters grew, the men of Boston could not help but notice her growing power and status within the community, which exceeded in exceptional terms the patriarchal limitations of colonial New England.⁶⁷

As word of Hutchinson's radical interpretation of free grace spread across the town, so too did her criticisms of the local New England clergy, whom she condemned for preaching a popish "covenant of works." She began holding meetings twice a week in her home across the street from Winthrop's. Alternate crowds of men and women came in scores and listened intently as she recited from memory the sermons of local ministers, afterwards offering her own thoughts on how Boston's clergy might walk more closely with the true gospel of free grace. She seemed especially disdainful of Boston's John Wilson and the minister of the Newtown, church, Thomas Shepard. John Cotton unsurprisingly offered an important exception. The Hutchinsonians cited his doctrine on free grace as clerical sanction for their antinomian belief that the Holy Ghost resided in each saint, and that his presence in the believer authorized them to exercise spiritual gifts, especially prophecy.⁶⁸ Like Coleman Street radicals, Boston's antinomians believed that their regeneration came through this personal union with the spirit, and not through church rituals and ordinances, or from any meritorious work of the believer.⁶⁹ God alone

⁶⁷ Rebecca J. Tannenbaum, *The Healer's Calling: Women and Medicine in Early New England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 84-89.

⁶⁸ Emerson, *John Cotton*, 86; George Selement, "John Cotton's Hidden Antinomianism: His Sermon on Rev 4: 1-2" *NEHGR* 129 (1975), 285-99.

⁶⁹ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 241; *Winthrop's Journal*, 1:195.

saved through his mercy; humans could not convince God to save them through their own actions.⁷⁰

Hutchinson criticized Shepard and other New England ministers for teaching the doctrine of “preparation,” by which sincere believers “prepared” their hearts for salvation through prayer, good works, and pious devotion to church ordinances. From the spiritist perspective, if the teaching of preparation went unchallenged, the reformed Protestant commonwealth would be built upon a false spiritual foundation.⁷¹ Some in Hutchinson’s conventicle began to proclaim that God had given her to New England for some divine purpose, perhaps “the calling of the Jews,” a sign that marked the last days as foretold in the Book of Revelation.⁷² Mrs. Hutchinson’s followers apprehended her as a prophetess of the Reformation who could hasten the millennial reign of the saints in the New Jerusalem.⁷³

By the end of 1636, the Hutchinsonians began spreading their criticism of the clergy outside the conventicle and into their places of business, in sessions of militia drilling, in taverns, during election day ceremonies, and in the First Church.⁷⁴ Shouting

⁷⁰ Battis, *Saints and Sectaries*, 129-133.

⁷¹ George Selement and Bruce Wolley, eds., *Thomas Shepard’s Confessions* (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1981), Introduction. For the tension between the doctrine of preparation and the covenant of grace, see Perry Miller, *New England Mind*, 57-67; Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal*, 118-148; Bozeman, *Precisianist Strain*, 107-111; William Stoeber, ‘A Faire and Easy Way to Heaven:’ *Covenant Theology and Antinomianism in Early Massachusetts* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1978), 58-81; 192-200. For more on Shepard, see Michael McGiffert, ed., *God’s Plot: Puritan Spirituality in Thomas Shepard’s Cambridge* (Amherst, 1994).

⁷² Battis, *Saints and Sectaries*, 7-15, 114-124, 272-276; Winthrop, “Short Story,” in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 219, 262-264.

⁷³ Winthrop’s *Journal*, 1: 240.

⁷⁴ Winthrop, “Short Story,” in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 209; Louise Breen, “Religious Radicalism in the Puritan Officer Corps: Heterodoxy, the Artillery Company, and Cultural Integration in Seventeenth-Century Boston,” *New England Quarterly* 68 (1995), 24; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 72-78; Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 241-257; Rutman, *Winthrop’s Boston*, 169-172; Hall, “Introduction,” in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 8-9.

down Pastor John Wilson and Thomas Shepard during their sermons, they challenged the clerics to debate their doctrines publicly, the same practice that shocked Thomas Edwards on Coleman Street, and one that had resulted in the banishment of Roger Williams from the Bay Colony.⁷⁵ “Come, I will take you to hear some who preaches better gospel than any of your blackcoats at the ninnieversity,” one elderly Hutchinsonian said to a shocked Edward Johnson, taking him by the hand as he stepped ashore in Boston.⁷⁶

Repeating sermons to her gathering and then subjecting them to excruciating scrutiny through her own reading of the sacred texts, Hutchinson laid claim to the spiritual gift of prophesy. In England, godly ministers and the laity practiced this pietistic exercise together, although we have seen how it took on a more menacing aspect when performed by mechanick preachers and their separatist flocks on Coleman Street.⁷⁷ Once ashore in America, the clergy and their supporters on the General Court seized the opportunity to create a godly orthodoxy that would eliminate the need for lay prophecy.⁷⁸ New England’s ministers claimed their monopoly on prophecy through the authority of their ordination, which American radicals in line with Samuel How viewed as a function of human learning that did not necessarily constitute authentic godliness. Through prophecy, Hutchinson’s conventicle, like Williams’ church in Salem and How’s church in London, democratized the church’s spiritual gifts, making them the

⁷⁵ Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 245-48; *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 209.

⁷⁶ Johnson, *Wonder Working Providence*, 127. Also quoted in Dailey, “Root and Branch,” 48. Johnson went on to become one of radical sectarianism’s fiercest critics as well as New England’s greatest apologist until the reign of Cotton Mather late in the seventeenth century. We will find in the next chapter that apologetics written on behalf of New England regularly resorted to fierce invectives against sectarians to defend the reputations of the godly church in America.

⁷⁷ Timothy Hall, “Assurance, Community, and the Puritan Self in the Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638,” in Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents*, 205-207. For the origin of and clerical resistance to lay prophesying, see Geoffrey Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 76-82.

property of a mixed-gendered laity.⁷⁹ Divisive and factional within the fledgling community, Hutchinson's antinomian conventicle popularized Williams' pre-existing challenge to the New England clerisy by working within rather than apart from Boston's First Church. Consequently, the Hutchinsonian challenge diminished the clerisy's power to define orthodoxy and thus the shape of reformation in the Bay Colony.⁸⁰ This created an American conduit for a radical challenge that, in contrast to the subterranean separatism of the London underground, devolved into an outright, active struggle to wrest religious and political power away from those who held it by force of social convention.⁸¹

This recognition helps us put the wrangling over preparation, free grace, and lay preaching and prophecy in New England into a more illuminating social and political context.⁸² Winthrop most clearly expressed his disdain for popular challenges to magisterial authority when he wrote that "Judges are Gods upon earth." This made resisting the authority of *godly* magistrates in spiritual and civil affairs both sinful and criminal as it violated the hierarchical character of the moral law that provided ethical cohesion and civil order in the community.⁸³ Set against this construct, antinomians and separatists went beyond the conventional bounds Winthrop, the clergy, and courts set for religious toleration. The anxiety Winthrop gave voice to on the *Arbella* concerning the

⁷⁹ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 61, 62, 111, 242, 258.

⁸⁰ David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Beliefs in Early New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 94-98, 109-11; Michael Winship, *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636-1641* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002). Winship writes that the Antinomian Controversy, which he renames the "free grace controversy," represented the "common colonial problem of reproducing hierarchical English lines of authority," "foreshadowing" a similar contest in England itself, "when those lines of authority became blurred...during the Civil Wars and Commonwealth period" (231).

⁸¹ Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 44-61; *Rites of Assent*, 68-89; Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 189-196; Winship, *Making Heretics*, 231.

⁸² Archer, *Fissures in the Rock*, 27-97;

⁸³ Quoted in Schweninger, *John Winthrop*, 99; Stoeber, *Faire and Easy Way*, 161-184; Bozeman, *Precisianist Strain*, 281-306

preservation of traditional hierarchies was indeed prophetic. As events would show, the generation of the Great Migration could not withstand the tension within a society, consumed by the urgency of the Reformation's millennial moment, composed of individuals convinced of their own election and the rectitude of their doctrinal views. Once in New England, liberty of conscience, once a unifying bastion of saintly resistance, passed easily into the realm of factionalism and the forbidden world of blasphemy, heresy, and sedition. The problem was, however, that most of the laity having tasted the sweetness of prophetic dissent had grown accustomed to pursuing the truth of reformation in the way the spirit and scripture moved them. They saw no need to abandon this freedom simply because they had left the bishops behind. A new world could reveal new truths, new revelations about the shape and character of godliness, conditions that made prophesying indispensable to the laity.⁸⁴ Thus, the Hutchinson affair threw new light upon what had been slowly emerging within the godly communities of Old and New England: magisterial and radical visions of reformation that now contended for supremacy across the Atlantic world.

But far from the Coleman Street conflict where religious convictions shaped class antagonisms, in many ways the Antinomian Controversy represented a political debate among the colonial elite to define the "moral law" either as a guarantor of clerical and magisterial authority or as a leveling instrument that would bring these institutions of power in line with the higher law of the spirit as interpreted by the laity. Although Hutchinson's meetings attracted many of the colony's servants, Boston in 1636 still retained much of its original "middling-sort" homogeneity, so the Hutchinsonian

⁸⁴ Anthony Pagden, "The Impact of the New World Upon the Old," *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 30 (1986), 1-11.

challenge lacked much of the socio-economic edge that Coleman Street sectarians brought to their radical spiritism.⁸⁵ Like How and Lamb's conventicles, however, Hutchinson did attract many of the colony's females, who urged their husbands to come hear her lectures.⁸⁶ This, unsurprisingly, appeared to subvert traditionally gendered hierarchies of power within the family, an aspect of the Hutchinsonian meetings that increasingly galvanized clerical opposition to the group. While the preponderance of women certainly added to the ill-repute of the gatherings, a review of the conventicle's membership reveals that it also attracted many of the colony's most prominent men.⁸⁷ Among these numbered Henry Vane, Jr, a twenty-two year old member of the gentry whose father served as privy councilor to Charles I. Vane claimed personal union with the Holy Spirit, which, judging by his election to the Bay Colony governor's chair in 1636, was not an unpopular position in Boston.⁸⁸ William Coddington, a member of the General Court and one of the richest men in the colony, also attended Hutchinson's meetings.⁸⁹ William Aspinwall came as well, and as a clothier, deacon, recorder of deeds, and deputy of the General Court, his presence became a measure of the group's social prominence and political power.⁹⁰ Other members included John Clarke, a merchant and physician who joined the faction after leaving England in 1637. We have already met John Wheelwright. As a minister in Lincolnshire, he closed with free grace teachings under the tutelage of John Cotton, who also influenced Hanserd Knollys,

⁸⁵ Louise Breen, *Transgressing the Bounds: Subversive Enterprises Among the Puritan Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Battis, *Saints and Sectaries*, 262-280.

⁸⁶ Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop* (New York: Longman, 1999), 138; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 69-70.

⁸⁷ Bailyn, *New England Merchants*, 40.

⁸⁸ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 247; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 91-92; Adamson and Folland, *Henry Vane*, 69.

⁸⁹ Battis, *Saints and Sectaries*, 258-259.

⁹⁰ B.S. Capp, "William Aspinwall," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 1: 25-26; *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 2nd Series, 12 (1897-99).

another minister from the region and an old friend of Wheelwright's from Cambridge. Knollys associated with the Hutchinsonians when he came to New England in 1637.⁹¹ Far from autodidact lay preachers, many of the Hutchinsonian men had attended Oxford's Brasenose or Cambridge's Emmanuel Colleges.

Assembling in Hutchinson's house, sometimes in numbers that exceeded eighty, the bi-weekly meetings emboldened the antinomians to question face-to-face what their ministers preached, which predictably threw the peaceable kingdom into a state of chaos. "After...our public lectures," wrote John Winthrop, "you might have seen half a dozen pistols discharged at the face of the preacher, (I mean) so many objections made by the opinionists in the open Assembly."⁹² Thomas Shepard, the leading exponent of the doctrine of preparation and John Cotton's clerical rival, organized the clergy's response to the Hutchinsonians, pledging to "root out the Familistical opinionists." Recognizing that the moral fabric of the community was at stake, Winthrop and Shepard resolved to keep more antinomians from entering the colony. In October 1636, Thomas Shepard proposed stricter religious tests for immigrants to weed-out incoming antinomians, whose numbers among New England's arrivals rose in proportion with Laudian persecution in England. Deputy Governor John Winthrop warmly supported the ordinance.⁹³ This predictably enraged Henry Vane, the sitting governor and the most powerful antinomian in the colony, and provoked more vocal challenges to Wilson in the First Church. Frustrated with the escalating tension, the Bay Colony clerics put John Cotton under inquisitional scrutiny and began collecting testimony about Hutchinson's teachings and

⁹¹ B.R. White, "Hanserd Knollys," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 2:160; Dailey, "Root and Branch," 115-118.

⁹² Winthrop, "Short Story," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 209.

⁹³ Battis, *Saints and Sectaries*, 155; Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 252.

her criticisms of the clergy. This, according to Shepard, would help the godly “observe what is amiss in one another” in order “...to purge out all our corruptors.”⁹⁴

As we saw at the outset of the chapter, Wheelwright’s sermon in January 1637 helped the antinomians fashion themselves as agents in the passage of prophetic time, godly soldiers helping to usher in the reign of Christ in the new world Sion.⁹⁵ “Did not Christ come to send fire on the earth?” asked Wheelwright.⁹⁶ An apocalyptic urgency seethed through Wheelwright’s address, where challenging ungodly ministers became a duty for each saint. “In this way might antichrist be consumed,” exclaimed Wheelwright, who continued to provoke the saints to action with a series of incendiary questions. “Why might we not further this fire, who knoweth not when the Jews may be converted?... We know not how soon the conversion of the Jews may come, and if they come, they must come by the downfall of antichrist, and if we take him away, we must burn him.”⁹⁷ “We must put on the whole armour of god,” exclaimed the preacher, “and must have our loins girt and be ready to fight...all the children of God out to show themselves valiant...they should have their swords ready, they must fight.”⁹⁸ Winthrop and his friends among the New England clergy and on the General Court stood aghast as Wheelwright’s words echoed around the unpainted, wooden meeting hall.

Although Wheelwright cautioned that “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual,” his sermon enraged the clergy and alarmed the General Court who

⁹⁴ Palfrey, *History of New England*, 1: 495; Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 24-152. This section of Hall’s primary document collection includes letters between Shepard and Cotton, and Cotton’s formal replies to charges by his clerical colleagues that his views on the covenant of grace bordered on heresy.

⁹⁵ Batts, *Saints and Sectaries*, 155.

⁹⁶ Wheelwright, “Fast Day Sermon,” in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 165

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 165.

regarded the address as a call to arms against constituted authority.⁹⁹ The “combustions in the commonwealth” that Wheelwright rightly predicted exploded in March 1637 when the General Court brought him before the bench on charges of sedition.¹⁰⁰ As a determined supporter of the defendant and a critic of magisterial interference in religious affairs, Governor Vane refused to cooperate in the proceedings.¹⁰¹ The court nonetheless convicted Wheelwright for contempt and sedition.¹⁰² Sensing that the Hutchinsonians had grown too strong and too angry, the court declared that the gubernatorial election scheduled for May would be moved from its customary site in Boston where the antinomians had gained the ascendancy. The elections would be held in Newtown where Thomas Shepard presided over the church.¹⁰³ Vane, who had declared his intention to leave the colony after Wheelwright’s banishment, now vowed to remain and oppose Winthrop’s bid for the governor’s seat.¹⁰⁴

Wheelwright’s supporters saw Winthrop’s hand in the sudden maneuver to change the election site and through Vane’s influence, they orchestrated a popular opposition movement.¹⁰⁵ This concerted resistance took the form of petitioning. Vane and several supporters tendered one directly to the court, which the First Church of Boston did as well.¹⁰⁶ William Aspinwall secretly circulated another petition throughout the colony to contest Wheelwright’s banishment and Winthrop’s move to unseat Vane.¹⁰⁷ As a time-honored liberty in the English political tradition, petitioning embodied the

⁹⁹ Ibid., 158.

¹⁰⁰ *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 214; Palfrey, *History of New England*, 1: 483.

¹⁰¹ *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 216; Battis, *Saints and Sectaries*, 148-149.

¹⁰² Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 250; Battis, *Saints and Sectaries*, 149-150; Palfrey, *History of New England*, 1: 483.

¹⁰³ *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 216.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 1: 208.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 1: 210-211.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 1: 216.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 1: 216.

rights of Englishmen to hold their representatives and sovereign accountable to the rule of law, which the antinomians believed had been usurped in the clerical and judicial campaign against Wheelwright and Vane.¹⁰⁸ With the mobilization of an increasingly powerful political faction across the colony, the antinomians seemed poised to takeover the colony. Both Winthrop's and Vane's camps looked toward the May election as a showdown to determine political power in New England.

On May 17, election day, the court scribe recorded that "there was great danger of a tumult" as tempers flared between Vane and Winthrop's factions.¹⁰⁹ The court declined to read Aspinwall's petition to the assembly, which angered the antinomians so much that they refused to cooperate in the proceedings. At this point, Winthrop led his faction across Newtown's common and proceeded to elect himself governor. This occasioned a brawl between the colony's freemen as "fierce speeches" between the contending sides heated passions to the point where "some laid hands on others." When the dust cleared, Winthrop and his faction controlled the court, which refused to seat Vane, Aspinwall, and Coddington as deputies.¹¹⁰ The events at Newtown dramatically illustrated the court's systematic attempt to arrest the growth of antinomianism through methods that ranged from banishment and immigration restriction to rigged elections.¹¹¹ Later that year, in a show of opposition, the Boston freemen tried in vain to reaffirm their election of Aspinwall and Coddington, "because it was their liberty, and those were the ablest men"

¹⁰⁸ Winthrop, "Short Story," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 260-261; David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 83-90.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 219-220.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 220, 224, 245; Battis, *Saints and Sectaries*, 152.

¹¹¹ *Winthrop's Journal*, 1: 224; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 92; Schweninger, *John Winthrop*, 101; Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal*, 200.

to serve on the court.¹¹² Following his embarrassing defeat, young Henry Vane left for England in disgust, claiming urgent business.¹¹³

Before he left, however, Vane set out to answer Winthrop's published defense of the court's actions against Wheelwright. Winthrop's short statement laid bare the very core of his thinking concerning the relationship between godly authority and godly justice in a Christian commonwealth. He characterized the petitions organized on Wheelwright's behalf as unlawful devices that fomented rebellion: "You invited the body of the people to join with you in your seditious attempt against the court and the authority here established." This contradicted "the rule of the apostle" Paul, "who requires every soul to be subject to the higher powers, and every Christian man to study to be quiet and to meddle with his own business."¹¹⁴ The will of godly magistrates, according to Winthrop, trumped common law liberties, which could not be marshaled to defend arguments that conjured up sedition against constituted courts charged with protecting the colony against heresy. By evoking the apostle Paul's famous edict on obedience, Winthrop elevated his confrontation with the antinomians into a conceptual debate about the relationship between justice and sovereign power in a godly commonwealth.¹¹⁵ Vane, in contrast, condemned the court for demanding obedience to magistrates who had unjustly disenfranchised "truly and particularly religious" saints with whom they disagreed. "Members of a common wealth may not seek out all means that may conduce to the welfare of the body," only "lawful and due means, according to the charter they hold, from God or the King, or both" could provide a just foundation for the actions of

¹¹² Winthrop, "Short Story," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 252.

¹¹³ *Winthrop's Journal*, 1: 229.

¹¹⁴ *Winthrop's Journal*, 1: 403.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1: 403-404; Schweninger, *John Winthrop*, 102-103.

magistrates.¹¹⁶ According to the commonwealth principles that we examined earlier, only kings held legal prerogative power, and even in this case, as Sir John Eliot had remarked during the Forced Loan controversies (with which Vane was undoubtedly familiar), “a lawful king will not do what he may do.”¹¹⁷ Kings acted as tyrants when they ruled in an arbitrary fashion; but even if they legally exercised their royal prerogative, they were still capable of committing injustices. The magistrates of New England were not kings, and had violated commonwealth principles by usurping the monarch’s exclusive prerogative power. Vane, displaying his fidelity to the rule of law, wrote that the King’s charter established the “common wealth” of Massachusetts; therefore its governors were beholden to rule according to the same principles of justice that the colonists had enjoyed as freeborn Englishmen. Vane thus argued that subverting the law to preserve unity in the face of heterodoxy violated the spirit, substance, and letter of the law and formed a natural springboard for tyranny.¹¹⁸ Although Vane enlisted the common law in defense of the antinomian challenge, as Philip Gura writes, he did not articulate a philosophical defense of liberty of conscience as a natural right.¹¹⁹ But in choosing common law language to frame his reply to Winthrop, a common law lawyer, Vane’s answer speaks more to tactical considerations than a lack of commitment to toleration itself. Ultimately in New England, Vane appealed to traditional concepts of English justice within a novel context, whereas Williams had displayed truly radical

¹¹⁶ Thomas Hutchinson, ed., *Collection of Original Papers Relative to the History of Massachusetts Bay* (Boston: Prince Society Publications, 1865), 1: 84-85.

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Morrill, “Rhetoric and Action,” in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 91-113; Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution*, 162-167.

¹¹⁸ J. Max Patrick, “The Idea of Liberty in the Theological Writings of Sir Henry Vane the Younger,” in Leland Carlson, ed., *The Dissenting Tradition: Essays for Leland H. Carlson* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1975), 101; Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal*, 202.

¹¹⁹ Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 187-188.

colors through his explicit defense of unlimited liberty of conscience. Unlike Vane, Williams also extended toleration to Native Americans as a natural right that reached beyond the privileges of “true and particularly Christian” English saints. Later, we will see how the experience of the English Civil War would work upon Vane, who alongside Williams in London, would become one of toleration’s greatest champions in Parliament.

When Vane’s ship sailed into the eastern horizon in August 1637, his loyal supporters in the Boston militia fired a full military salute over the harbor. When the men left the dock and returned to town, they encountered a horrific sight: the heads of slain Pequot warriors impaled on the market gate. This cast a grisly pall over another tragic spectacle: the sale of captive Pequots into slavery.¹²⁰ Few if any historians have noted that Vane’s fall from power marked not only a defeat for the antinomians but also a dramatic shift in the Bay Colony’s policy regarding its Pequot neighbors. Before Vane’s election as governor in 1634, a group of Indians, probably tributaries to the Pequots, had killed the West Indian privateer, Captain Stone, after he had kidnapped several of their fellows in order to extract a hefty ransom.¹²¹ This killing occurred in the Connecticut River Valley, a region dominated by the Pequots but contested by three other groups, the Dutch colonists of New Netherland, the Bay Colonists, and a group led by the Reverend Thomas Hooker who had left Massachusetts to settle the region. To capitalize on its claims in the valley, the Bay Colony signed a trading treaty with the Pequots in 1634 after demanding tributes of wampum as restitution for Stone’s murder.¹²² They also tried to extend the Bay Colony’s authority over Hooker’s settlement, and through the

¹²⁰ Battis, *Saints and Sectaries*, 161.

¹²¹ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 188-190; Bradford, *Plymouth Plantation*, 268-270; William Hubbard, *The Present State of New England, Being a Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians in New England* (London, 1677), 118.

¹²² Cave, *The Pequot War*, 69-72.

Saybrook Company, established a fort and settlement at the mouth of the Connecticut River governed by John Winthrop, Jr.¹²³ Thus, from 1634-1636, the Bay Colony thwarted the Dutch, profited from the Pequots, and expanded its dominion in this disputed territory.

Early in 1636, however, English settlers upset the balance and began attacking local Indians, which the Pequots responded to with bloody reprisals that threatened to erupt into a full-scale war. In July 1636, the newly elected Governor Vane and a newcomer, Hugh Peter, who represented the Saybrook Company, averted a near certain war by concluding a treaty with the Pequots at Fort Saybrook.¹²⁴ Despite this, Vane seems to have had a weaker hand in the Bay Colony Council than his Deputy Governor, Winthrop, who dominated the correspondence on Indian affairs with Plymouth's Governor William Bradford; it was also Winthrop's son John who had charge of the Connecticut territory under dispute with the Pequots. But it was Governor Vane who, with the approval of the Bay Colony Council, ordered John Endicott's troop of militia to attack the Pequot settlement on Block Island.¹²⁵ The Council defended this as an act of just revenge although it ended in a fiasco with the militia burning sixty acres of corn after unsuccessfully seeking an engagement with Pequot warriors. Far from distributing justice, the tactic backfired and the Pequots approached their old enemies the Narragansetts with an offer to align their two tribes against the English colonists.

Working through Roger Williams, Winthrop superseded Vane and dissuaded the Narragansetts from this course of action and managed to negotiate a defensive alliance

¹²³ Ibid., 92; Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 193-201; *Winthrop's Journal*, 1: 148-149.

¹²⁴ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 204; Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 126; Cave, *The Pequot War*, 101.

¹²⁵ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 208-212; John Underhill, *News from America* (London, 1638), 7-9; Bremer, *Winthrop*, 269-270.

with their sachem, Miantanamo.¹²⁶ Although Vane reinforced the English garrison at Saybrook in April 1637, he never ordered the troops to launch an offensive war of conquest against the tribe. It should be noted here that the General Court had voted in favor of such actions that month.¹²⁷ In fact, while he was Governor, the Bay Colony reinforcements at Saybrook declined to participate in an attack on local Pequots, as “they were not fitted for such a design,” according to Captain Gardiner.¹²⁸ Francis Jennings suggests that Winthrop, while serving as Deputy Governor entertained thoughts of a war with the Pequots all along but was “immobilized...by the newly developed hostility” that Vane displayed toward him during the Antinomian Controversy.¹²⁹ Winthrop also shared an interest with his son John in expanding their family’s and the Saybrook Company’s interest contra Hooker’s group in the Connecticut River Valley, where the Pequots held sway. Vane had interests in the Saybrook Company as well, but did not push for war. The 1636 Pequot treaty prevented the Bay Colony and the Saybrook Company from expanding colonial settlement up the valley by force, a compact that Vane seemed inclined to honor.

Winthrop’s election on May 17, 1637 dictated a sharp departure from Vane’s Pequot policy. Shortly after assuming the reigns of power, Winthrop ordered the Bay Colony militia to attack the Pequots with additional reinforcements supplied by Narragansett warriors and Captain John Mason’s Connecticut troops.¹³⁰ Upon what grounds did Winthrop justify this offensive? Winthrop claimed the attack would

¹²⁶ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 213; Palfrey, *History of New England*, 1: 460-461; Cave, *The Pequot War*, 122-128; Bremer, *Winthrop*, 269-270.

¹²⁷ *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 217.

¹²⁸ Lion Gardiner, “Lieft. Lion Gardner his relation of the Pequot Warres,” *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, 3rd Series, 3: 148-149.

¹²⁹ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 218.

¹³⁰ *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 218, 222.

represent just revenge against the Pequots for the murder of the ne'er do well, Captain Stone, a man that the Bay Colony had banished in 1634 due to his drunken behavior, notorious philandering, and alleged piracy.¹³¹ The blood of Oldham also called for justice, although he too had been censured in the Bay Colony for his untoward behavior. Vane, while occupying the governor's office, had rejected this pretense for war. Most of his supporters among the antinomian faction thought the same way, and declined to join the militia contingent that Winthrop dispatched under the command of Captain John Underhill. Pastor John Wilson of the First Boston Church, the implacable foe of the antinomians, volunteered to serve as the expedition's chaplain.¹³²

Marching on May 26, 1637, just two weeks after Vane's defeat at Newtown, the Narragansett, Connecticut, and Massachusetts forces advanced against a Pequot village located alongside the Mystic River. Captain Mason resolved to set fire to the Indian dwellings after having "formerly concluded to destroy" the Indians "by the sword and save the plunder."¹³³ Captain John Underhill, the Bay Colony commander, described the slaughter:

Many were burnt in the fort, both men, women and children. Others forced out, and came in troops to the Indians, twenty and thirty at a time, which our soldiers received on the point of a sword. Down fell men, women and children...there were about four hundred souls in this fort, and not above five of them escaped out of our hands.¹³⁴

Mason estimated that between six and seven hundred Pequots died that day, burned alive in the conflagration set by his troops.¹³⁵ The Indians who did make it out of the fort fled

¹³¹ *Winthrop's Journal*, 1: 104, 111.

¹³² Winthrop, "Short Story," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 254.

¹³³ Stephen Katz, "The Pequot War Reconsidered," in Vaughan, ed., *New England Encounters*, 118.

¹³⁴ Underhill, *News from America*, 41-43; Katz, "Pequot War Reconsidered," in Vaughan, ed., *New England Encounters*, 117.

¹³⁵ Cave, *The Pequot War*, 151.

to the Narragansett warriors, who watched the carnage in horror, crying out “Mach it, Mach it,” which Underhill interpreted to mean “it is naught because it kills too many men.” The Narragansetts left in disgust, unaccustomed to wars of extermination, and Mason’s men retreated in fear that the Pequot warriors might return to find that the godly party had exhausted its ammunition after expending it on lightly defended Pequot families. Subsequent expeditions massacred more Pequot women and children.¹³⁶

The “war” cleared the Connecticut River Valley for settlement and trade and opened a new chapter in New England’s increasing prosperity. The saints sold captive Pequots to Caribbean tobacco and sugar planters on Providence Island, a profitable venture in slave-trading that helped forge the commercial links then developing between New England and the West Indies.¹³⁷ The harbors that the colonists gained on the Connecticut River would also play a vital role in forwarding New England’s commercial ties to the Caribbean and the wider Atlantic trade. Not all of the colonists conceived of this bloodbath as a providential victory for the godly, however. After the massacre, Roger Williams pleaded against selling the captives into slavery. Governor Winthrop remained unmoved by Williams’ appeal.¹³⁸

The tensions raised by the antinomian refusal to join the Pequot campaign would have dramatic repercussions during Wheelwright’s final appearance before the court in

¹³⁶ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 222-225; Katz, “Pequot War Reconsidered,” 118-120; Cave, *The Pequot War*, 148-153; John Underhill, *News from America*, 41-43. Underhill was one of the only antinomians to participate in the Pequot expedition. The sincerity of his religious convictions, however, may be seriously doubted. His antinomianism seems to have been chemically induced, “as he was taking a pipeful of tobacco, the Spirit set home an absolute promise of free grace.” He also used his powers of spiritual comfort to seduce the wives of his neighbors. *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 270-1. Underhill’s untoward behavior does not fit the pattern set by other members of the conventicle.

¹³⁷ Cave, *The Pequot War*, 159.

¹³⁸ LaFantasie, ed., *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 1: 108-110, 191-94; Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 113; Cave, *The Pequot War*, 159. Williams saved a Pequot boy from certain slavery by adopting him. Francis Bremer writes incorrectly that Williams, like Winthrop, took captive Pequots as slaves. See his *Winthrop*, 314.

October 1637. Wheelwright's judges gave him a chance to retract his position on free grace, which Wheelwright refused to do, although he did protest the proceedings by pointing out their inconsistencies with the English common law. He appealed to the "King's Majesty" for a reprieve. This incensed the magistrates, who denied that common law tradition trumped their authority in the Bay Colony.¹³⁹ They proceeded to lecture Wheelwright about his divisive influence in the colony. All of Massachusetts' difficulties were laid at his feet, making him a convenient scapegoat for the antinomianism that "thence spreads into the families, and sets divisions between husband and wife, and other relations there." "Before he broached his opinions," proclaimed the court, "there was a peaceable and comely order in all affairs in the churches, and civil state." Nothing could have been more disingenuous, for the court, in choosing to overlook the widespread, pre-migration appeal of antinomianism, reconfigured heterodoxy as an evil design of unscrupulous demagogues like Wheelwright and Hutchinson.¹⁴⁰

The court continued its litany of condemnations, touching on the new polarization that the massacre at Fort Mystic had produced between the radicals and their opponents in the Bay Colony. Wheelwright and the antinomians, the court lamented, gave "great discouragement to the service" of the militia in the expedition. "Whereas in former expeditions the town of Boston was as forward as any others," the antinomian opposition to the Pequot campaign reduced the Boston contingent to "one or two whom they cared not to be rid of." "What was the reason of this difference?" the court asked rhetorically. Wheelwright, it alleged, taught the people that "the former governor" (Vane) and the

¹³⁹ Winthrop, "Short Story," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 257.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 254.

court's antinomian deputies "were friends of Christ and free grace," whereas Winthrop and the orthodox court "were enemies, Antichrists, and persecutors." It seems from this statement in the colonial records that antinomians refused to assist in Winthrop's war of Indian conquest, viewing him as a persecutor of the innocent. In contrast, the court declared that the "necessity of the peace" required Wheelwright's banishment. In this context, the court defined "peace" as both unlimited obedience to minister and magistrate and communal cohesion through the obliteration of a common enemy. Winthrop's opponents, it can be argued, regarded this war as an arbitrary act of violence and oppression. But the perfect bond of love and unity that Winthrop sought as governor called "for...such disturbers (to) be put out from among us, seeing it is one of their tenets that it is not possible their opinions and external peace can stand together."¹⁴¹

During the October proceedings against Wheelwright, the court found that William Aspinwall played the leading part in whipping-up popular opposition to the Winthrop party. During his interrogation it became clear that he had organized the petition to challenge the court's right to try Wheelwright for sedition.¹⁴² "Consider the danger of meddling with the prophets of the Lord," Aspinwall cautioned, "better a millstone were hanged around our necks...than we should offend any of these little ones."¹⁴³ In the petition, Aspinwall reminded the colonial government that both Paul and Christ had been counted as "pestilent fellows," "movers of sedition," and "ring-leaders of a Sect" for preaching the gospel of free grace. Prophecy, either lay or clerical, Aspinwall continued,

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 254.

¹⁴² Winthrop, "Short Story," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 250; *Proceedings Massachusetts Historical Society 1897-1899*, 211-212.

¹⁴³ *Winthrop's Journal*, 1: 403.

existed as a spiritual gift of Christ's elect, "the apple of my eye."¹⁴⁴ The Court faced the wrath of God if it "meddled" with this godly privilege. Replying to this "discontented and turbulent spirit," the court brought the debate back to its central point: would the Bay Colony command the obedience of its subjects? Winthrop told Aspinwall that "it was great arrogance of any private man thus openly to advance his own judgment before the court."¹⁴⁵ In contrast, the antinomians viewed Aspinwall as a rightful member of the court whose election to that body had been unjustly overturned.

Aspinwall did not back down. His friend William Coggeshall, another Hutchinsonian described by Winthrop as "a very busy instrument in the occasioning of our public disturbances," had adopted a meeker tone when called before his accusers and thus escaped banishment. This deacon of the First Church was nonetheless disenfranchised when he protested Wheelwright's sentencing, which he followed with an inflammatory call for the colony to restore its fidelity to the covenant of grace, the bedrock of Protestant teaching.¹⁴⁶ Seeing his friend Coggeshall disenfranchised, Aspinwall took a more reckless approach and turned the tables on the court by taking the moral high ground. Announcing proudly that he wrote the petition, he next exclaimed that he signed it "with his heart...to it as well as his hand." He then cried out that "the magistracy had unjustly punished Mr. Wheelwright...for dealing the truth of Christ."¹⁴⁷ Testifying that he "did but prefer a humble petition," the deacon cited two biblical precedents as well the freeborn traditions of England in defense of his right to petition.¹⁴⁸ The court replied that his biblical allusions were bogus, and that his petition questioned

¹⁴⁴ Winthrop, "Short Story," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 250.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 260.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 258.

¹⁴⁷ Battis, *Saints and Sectaries*, 187.

¹⁴⁸ Winthrop, "Short Story," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 260.

the very sovereignty of the court, an act of sedition unprotected by the common law.

Though the court had only planned to disenfranchise Aspinwall, perhaps because of the respect he commanded as a public servant and church officer, his “insolent and turbulent carriage” convinced them that his presence and the public peace were irreconcilable.

They promptly banished him with a salvo of cutting insults.¹⁴⁹ Both Aspinwall and Vane had challenged Winthrop and the court as usurpers who arbitrarily oppressed saints striving to establish a godly state in order to complete the Reformation; later in London, both men would confront Oliver Cromwell in much the same way.

New England’s controversy with radical challenges to the court and clergy spread beyond Boston and Newtown. In Salem, where Thomas Venner was then living, a Mrs. Oliver proclaimed that the church is “the heads of the people.” Congregations themselves were the only institutions that could lawfully ordain ministers. Furthermore, she denied that church authorities had the right to refuse anyone church membership, adding that the entire town should be privileged with admission. Others in Salem shared this view, and we know for certain that Thomas Venner would act upon them with force after he returned to London in 1652. But in 1638, Mrs. Oliver was compelled to apologize to the court, although she continued to agitate against the power of the clerical hierarchy after her release. Five years later the General Court sentenced her to be whipped for condemning the magistrates’ persecution of antinomians. Despite the painful lashing, “she stood without tying, and bore her punishment with a masculine

¹⁴⁹ Battis, *Saints and Sectaries*, 188; Shurtleff, ed., *Records of Massachusetts Bay Colony*, 1: 207.

spirit, glorying in her suffering.”¹⁵⁰ Perhaps Thomas Venner witnessed the violent spectacle and was inspired by Mrs. Oliver’s courage.

The clergy and court wished to strike their crowning blow, of course, against Mrs. Hutchinson. Exacting revenge for subverting the godly unity of the commonwealth, Thomas Shepard, joined by John Davenport of St. Stephen’s fame, took the leading part in the prosecution. Davenport arrived in Massachusetts in the summer of 1637 after spending several years in exile in Holland. As a former resident of Coleman Street Ward, he was more than familiar with the type of antinomian blasphemies professed by Mrs. Hutchinson.¹⁵¹ His gentleness with Mrs. Hutchinson contrasted sharply with the relentless Shepard, who identified her heresies as the belief in personal union with the Holy Spirit and her conviction that the moral law as interpreted by man was accountable to the higher law of the spirit written on the hearts of the elect.¹⁵² Although Davenport became convinced through a thorough round of questioning that Hutchinson would not persist in blasphemy, Shepard claimed that Hutchinson’s antinomianism inclined to anarchy. It “destroyed the use of the law,” “providing no rule of life for a Christian” society.¹⁵³ The court’s chief concern then was not just heterodoxy in and of itself, but the social and civil disorder it allegedly bred within the colony.

Pressed by the court to reveal the ultimate source of her convictions, Hutchinson unwisely admitted that they came from “an immediate revelation from God, by the voice

¹⁵⁰ *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1:281-282; Edward Winslow, *Hypocrisie Unmasked* (London, 1644). Winslow would boast of Mrs. Oliver’s lashing to assure English puritans that New England offered a model of reformed church organization with strict discipline administered to heretics.

¹⁵¹ Hall, *Faithful Sheperd*, 76; *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 227; “Examination of Mrs. Ann Hutchinson at the Court of Newtown,” in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 358-368.

¹⁵² Winthrop, “Short Story,” in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 301-303.

¹⁵³ “Examination of Mrs. Ann Hutchinson,” in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 360.

of his own spirit into my soul.”¹⁵⁴ With this heresy openly aired, the ministers, including Davenport, moved for and secured her banishment from the colony. The court construed Wheelwright’s sermon as seditious because its text contained exhortations to challenge the authority of the Bay Colony clerisy and court. The doctrine of free grace that Hutchinson proclaimed, as noxious as it appeared to the court and clergy, did not constitute sedition. But by exposing Anne Hutchinson’s reliance upon direct revelation, the court now construed her heresy to be the “very fountain” of sedition because it refused unconditional recognition of the magistrate’s temporal authority.

Hutchinson’s teachings clearly transcended what the court conceived of as liberty of conscience; what was at stake was the sovereignty of civil authority. As Winthrop wrote,

She walked by such a rule as cannot stand the peace of any state; for such bottomless revelations, as either came without any word, (which was framed to human capacity) if they be allowed in one thing, must be admitted a rule in all things; for they being above reason and scripture, they are not subject to control.¹⁵⁵

Without clerical and magisterial “control” of religious expression, the “peace of the state” would be turned upside down in a vacuum of order. Overpowered by the lower extremities of its constitution, the heads of the body politic would fall pray to the pathogen of inversion, which might prove lethal to the living organism of the commonwealth.

Following Hutchinson’s banishment, the specter of anarchy and bloodshed haunted the anxiety-ridden provincial governors, who feared an antinomian uprising in the colony. Recalling the bloody example of John of Leyden’s anabaptist insurrection

¹⁵⁴ Selement, “John Cotton’s Hidden Antinomianism,” 282.

¹⁵⁵ Winthrop, “Short Story,” in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 274; Also quoted in Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 76.

(1536) in the German city of Munster, Winthrop called for the disarming of the Hutchinson party.¹⁵⁶ Winthrop, Shepard, and Cotton looked at Hutchinson's conventicle as the thin edge of a libertine wedge that would introduce a "community of women" into the colony.¹⁵⁷ This had long been associated with John of Leyden's rebellion that had brought all property, including wives, into communal ownership in their short-lived commonwealth. They had also slaughtered the rulers of the city, as Winthrop surely remembered. Towards the end of the century, the Royalist scholar and heresiographer William Dugdale followed the diaspora of Leyden's followers across Holland and into England after the rebels were turned out of Munster. Dugdale drew, at best, a specious if not deliberately fabricated lineage of heresy, with Leyden's followers and their English progeny founding antinomian sects like the Family of Love in the late Sixteenth Century. Their descendants, wrote Dugdale, spread the radical gospel in London's sectarian underground.¹⁵⁸

Like Dugdale, John Winthrop read the antinomian challenge through the lens of the Munster rebellion. By disarming the antinomians in 1638, and by later casting them as Leyden-like insurgents in his account of the Hutchinson conflict, *A Short of the Rise and Ruin of the Antinomians*, Winthrop struck fear in the hearts of Bay Colonists that with antinomians about, nobody's property, nobody's lives, and nobody's wives were safe. As the colonists knew, Protestant history abounded with horrifying examples of how reform, once escaping magisterial control, devolved into bloody anarchy. Enlisting the Munster story represented another particularly clever if not deceitful attempt to keep the new world chapter of the reformation advancing along its proper, hierarchical, and

¹⁵⁶ *Winthrop's Journal*, 1: 247-248; Winthrop, "Short Story," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 275.

¹⁵⁷ "Examination of Mrs. Ann Hutchinson," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 368-374.

¹⁵⁸ Sir William Dugdale, *A Short View of the Late Troubles in England* (London, 1681), 2-8, 11-19.

magisterially-controlled course.¹⁵⁹ While the Winthrop faction used martial terror to annihilate the Pequots, they deployed a haunting image of radical terror to recast the popular, widespread antinomian movement as the work of bloodthirsty zealots bent on the destruction of the godly. Thus, with Indians and antinomians, the Winthrop regime suspended the threat of terror over the population to manipulate historical memory for the purposes of exercising ideological and political control over the commonwealth. As New England history unfolded over the 1640s, this technique would be employed with even greater frequency and with even greater success.

In this chapter, we have seen how the internal tensions plaguing the godly in Old England broke into open conflict in New England once the common threat of Stuart persecution receded. The conflict that wracked New England involved more than just hair-splitting theological debates; the radical conception of the common law and liberty of conscience questioned the very substance of what constituted sovereign authority in the church and state, complicating the effort to achieve consensus among the colonists about the true character of the Reformation. To the antinomians, the methods employed by the court and clergy to secure unity around a traditional ideal of hierarchical power appeared as the outward bondage of arbitrary government and prelatical tyranny. Through this dissonance, dissent in the Bay Colony was eventually recast as sedition once the Winthrop faction proved victorious in their political power struggle with the Hutchinsonians.

This chapter has also addressed how colonial encounters with Native Americans sharpened these conflicts, and highlighted each faction's understanding of the shape of

¹⁵⁹ Stoever, *Faire and Easy Way*, 161-163.

godly liberty. For the antinomians who suffered religious persecution in the colony, experience with Native Americans deepened their conviction in religious toleration and the need for commonwealths to establish and retain their authority through the consent of the people. Wars of conquest against the Pequots could not, therefore, be justified by specious appeals to avenge the deaths of hedonists banished by the colony. For the Winthrop faction, experience with Native Americans led them to objectify the natives as satanic threats to the Christian purity and the godly increase of the colony. In the next chapter, we will see how the Bay Colony's Indian conquests and anti-heterodox policies intensified its demonization of "heretics" and "savages" as it moved aggressively against both in the pursuit of profit. We will also see how those who endured religious persecution in Massachusetts would enshrine liberty of conscience as the foundational ideal of their exile commonwealth in Rhode Island.

CHAPTER THREE

“THE NEW CREATURE”: RADICAL POLITICS ON THE AMERICAN STRAND, 1638-1652

“Alas, we must look at them as men who had left their estates, friends, pleasures of their native soil, spiritual chemists, extracting the sweetness of all into freedom of conscience.”¹ So wrote John Wheelwright of his comrades in the Antinomian Controversy eight years after their banishment from the Bay Colony. These “spiritual chemists” distilled the “sweetness” of religious freedom from the bitter crucible of persecution, refining it in their Rhode Island exile into the essence of commonwealth liberty. This novel experiment also produced an expanded political consciousness that worked towards the abolition of antichristian forms of outward bondage around the Atlantic world. Ultimately, while the antinomians continued to condemn the Bay Colony’s Indian conquests, their opposition to the expropriation of the American commons would ultimately extend to a systematic critique of chattel slavery in New England. Surprisingly, these connections between toleration, peaceful Indian relations, and abolition have seldom been explored in American puritan studies.² Addressing a critical gap in this voluminous historiography, this chapter explores how the commonwealth principles of the Rhode Island radicals rendered the freeborn liberties of English Christians as the common freedom of colonists, natives, and enslaved Africans.

¹ John Wheelwright, *Mercurius Americanus: Mr. Weld’s His Antitype, or, Massachusetts’ Great Apology Examined* (London, 1645), 8.

² As my shameless borrowing from their pioneering work indicates, Philip Gura’s and David Lovejoy’s initial studies of the trans-Atlantic dimensions of American puritan radicalism have proven invaluable in the conceptualization of my overarching thesis. By looking at how radicals came to oppose Indian conquests and slavery, I am advancing their arguments concerning New England’s radicals in new directions by developing how the material circumstances of economic life in New England, along with Massachusetts’ systematic policy of territorial expansion through warfare, informed their view that the American stage of reformation had become increasingly shackled by forms of outward bondage that extended beyond religious persecution.

After their banishment from Massachusetts, the Hutchinsonians scattered throughout New England. John Wheelwright left for New Hampshire, while Anne Hutchinson, William Aspinwall, John Clarke, John Coggeshall, William Coddington, and hundreds of other dissidents fled from Boston in the winter of 1638, making their way to what we know now as Rhode Island.³ There, as we already know, another exile named Roger Williams had established a colony at Providence where all inhabitants worshipped freely. Williams helped the antinomians purchase an island called Aquidneck from the Narragansett Indians. Two towns would eventually flourish on the island, Newport and Portsmouth.

The colony attracted a diaspora of sorts consisting of New England's most notable religious enthusiasts. Among these loomed the controversial figure of Samuel Gorton, an antinomian whose enemies regarded him as "turbata respublica," or dangerous to the public good.⁴ He left London for America in 1636 "to enjoy liberty of conscience in respect to faith toward God."⁵ Once ashore in the Bay Colony, however, Gorton realized unhappily that the common ideal of religious liberty could not withstand the divisions plaguing the community. What Gorton deemed Christian righteousness, other saints called "blasphemous," and over the course of his first three years in America (1637-1639), colonial judges banished him from the Plymouth and Bay colonies for his "Fantastical opinions." At the same time that Samuel How and others were preaching

³ Sargent Bush, "John Wheelwright's Forgotten Apology: The Last Word in the Antinomian Controversy," *New England Quarterly* 64 (1991), 22-45; "Robert Keayne's Report of Boston Church Action, 1639," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 390-395.

⁴ Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 93; Nathaniel Ward, *The Simple Cobbler of Agawam* (1646), in P.M. Zall, ed., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), 14.

⁵ Samuel Gorton, *Simplicities Defense against a Seven-Headed Church Policy* (1646), in Sacvan Bercovitch, ed., *Tracts Against New England* (New York: AMS Press, 1985), 18; Foster, *The Long Argument*, 108-137.

radical reformation on Coleman Street, Gorton's "turbulent carriages towards both magistrates and ministers," in the words of Plymouth Governor Edward Winslow, had done much to "blow the bellows" of the antinomian "heresy" then burning through New England.⁶

Forced out of Plymouth in 1639, Gorton led several followers to Rhode Island following the trail blazed by the Boston exiles.⁷ Once settled on Aquidneck, the Gortonists found themselves in the midst of a power struggle between Mrs. Hutchinson's faction and another directed by the wealthy merchant, William Coddington.⁸ Coddington, who became the colony's first governor, was a contentious figure. As the record will reveal, it is fair to say that as one of the richest men in New England, he regarded exile in Rhode Island as a means to increase the already considerable political power he had wielded in Massachusetts. His undisguised ambition, however, alienated a large segment of the exile community. In March 1640, Gorton joined Hutchinson's faction in opposing Coddington's bid to extend his gubernatorial authority over the town governments of Portsmouth and Newport. Hutchinson's supporters, which included the fiery William Aspinwall, lost the battle and Gorton became a marked man, having challenged Coddington's religious scruples and political integrity. Wishing to rid himself

⁶ Nathaniel Morton, *New England's Memorial* (Cambridge, 1669), 108-109.

⁷ Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal*, 139.

⁸ Edward Winslow, *Hypocrisie Unmasked: A True Relation of the Proceedings of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Against Samuel Gorton of Rhode Island* (1646) in Howard Millar Chapin, ed., (Providence: The Club for Colonial Reprints, 1916), vii-viii. Henry Melville King, *A Summer Visit of Three Rhode Islanders to the Massachusetts Bay in 1651* (Providence, 1896), 16-18. Beginning in the mid-1640s, Coddington sought unification with Massachusetts, in order to benefit economically, and to diminish the rising tide of radicalism in Rhode Island. This rapprochement came on the condition that he would reign as lifetime governor. See James, *John Clarke*, 15-16.

of a perennial troublemaker, Coddington hauled Gorton into court, and for the third time in four years the radical found himself facing a hostile tribunal.⁹

Gorton would not go easily. Saluting the magistrates as “just-asses,” he went on to insult their pretended authority, calling them “saucy boys” and “jack-an-apes.” He stared down the deputy governor, and accused him of being an “abettor to riot, assault, and battery.” When the justices ordered him to be silent, he stood and shook his fist at his prosecutors, exclaiming that they had no legal authority to try him. The magistrates then decided on a more violent course of action. On their order, the sergeant-at-arms hustled the defendant to the pillory.¹⁰ While Gorton screamed that Coddington himself should be whipped, the radical’s supporters rushed the guards. After a brief scuffle, a constable bound Gorton and administered a lashing. When it was over, with his back still raw and bloody, Gorton gathered his chains about him and chased Coddington down the street, calling out to the governor that he had forgotten his irons and would need them later to persecute other saints.¹¹

William Aspinwall’s banishment for sedition in 1640 resulted most probably from Coddington’s opposition to the growing trend toward popular government led by the Hutchinson faction.¹² Before Coddington forced him out, however, Aspinwall had assisted in establishing Aquidneck’s first two constitutions, which widened the franchise and established town meetings to resolve civil disputes.¹³ In March 1641, after popular

⁹ King, *Summer Visit*, 16-18.

¹⁰ Howard Chapin, ed., *The Documentary History of Rhode Island* (Providence: Preston and Rounds Co., 1979), 2: viii.

¹¹ Winslow, *Hyprocrisie Unmasked* (London, 1646), 53-55.

¹² Aspinwall, *Notarial Records*, i-iv.

¹³ Chapin, ed, *Documentary History of Rhode Island*, 2: 19-21, 33-35, 51-57, 68, 117.

discontent swelled to a crisis point with the dismissal of Gorton and Aspinwall, the men of the island gathered at Portsmouth to ratify a constitution.¹⁴

Outside of local Rhode Island studies, the copious scholarship on American “puritanism” has oddly little to say about the historical context of the Portsmouth constitution, nor its significance as an early conceptualization of popular government that separated church from state. The constitution outlined key political principles that reflected the Hutchinsonians’ recent experiences with the ambitious Coddington and persecution in the Bay Colony. The settlers limited the governor’s term to a maximum of one year, a pragmatic move to reign in Coddington that also reflected a more philosophical innovation in how a commonwealth might organize itself to prevent the rise of arbitrary government in the hands of a single person. Fearing this concentration of power, the Rhode Islanders explicitly declared that their commonwealth was a “democracy.”¹⁵ In the seventeenth century, this was anathema to most men who held political power or reflected on its ideal nature and distribution. John Winthrop called democracy “the meanest and worst forms of all government,” a view shared by Thomas Shepard who wrote in 1641 that most men “were unfit to rule themselves.”¹⁶ As to church and commonwealth, Winthrop and Shepard believed that they should be “aristocratical,” with a popular voice allowed only in the election of civil officials who retained a “negative voice” to preserve government from the whims of the “turbulent”

¹⁴ John Callendar, ed., *An Historical Discourse on the Civil and Religious Affairs of the Colony of Rhode Island* (Providence: Knowles, Vose and Co., 1838), 210-213. Also see Donald S. Lutz, ed., “Rhode Island,” *Colonial Origins of the American Constitution: A Documentary History* (1998), http://oll.libertyfund.org/Texts/LFBooks/Lutz0397/ColonialOrigins/HTMLs/0013_Pt04_RI.html#hd_lf013.head.229.

¹⁵ Callendar, ed., *Historical Discourse*, 213; Lutz, “Rhode Island.”

¹⁶ Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 79-80; Shepard, *Works* 3: 332, 341, 350.

multitude.¹⁷ To most New England clerics and magistrates, this was a political philosophy that embodied the deference necessary for providentially-ordained, natural elites to exercise their rightful power in society.¹⁸

Bay Colony clerics and magistrates dismissed un-mixed democracies because they broke the great chain of being, or the godly order by which commonwealths distributed power in civil government.¹⁹ Those who were “mean and in submission” must obey those who were “high and eminent in power and dignity” because God had “ordered these differences for the preservation and good of the whole.”²⁰ In a society whose ruling-class governed through such a deferential philosophy, the leveling of godly authority through a (male exclusive) democratic political structure challenged both the moral and natural order as well as traditional concepts of political sovereignty.²¹

Describing colonial New England, one of its most respected historians has written that, “inequality was a cultural assumption and a socioeconomic reality.”²² Although socioeconomic inequality was real, whether inequality was a monoglot “cultural assumption” deserves discussion. Certainly, many New Englanders adhered to traditional notions of a stratified society, but as we saw earlier on Coleman Street, that does not mean that this cultural assumption went uncontested. The prevalence of lay preaching, the leveling spirit of religious enthusiasm, and the popular support for the Hutchinsonian

¹⁷ Schweninger, *John Winthrop*, 108-110.

¹⁸ Ford, “Cotton’s Moses,” 275-284.

¹⁹ Lurie, “Some Ideas of Commonwealth in Early Modern England,” in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Reformation, Humanism, and Revolution*, 293-306.

²⁰ Winthrop, *A Model of Christian Charity*, 1.

²¹ Miller, *New England Mind*, 398-431. This passage largely follows Perry Miller’s argument concerning the impact that “federal” or “covenant” theory had on puritan ideas concerning social order and government. Also see Stoevers’ chapter, “The Doctrine of the Two Covenants: Divine Sovereignty, Human Agency, and the Problem of the Conditional Covenant,” in *A Faire and Easy Way*, 119-118.

²² Bremer, *Winthrop*, 176.

political challenge offer clear evidence that New England's radicals rejected many of the inegalitarian features of early modern society.

The implications of this social conflict warrant further exploration.²³ To view the New England radicals merely as religious subalterns, as many historians have, would imply that they simply deviated from a colony-wide consensus concerning religious doctrine and the moral order. In my view, however, the record shows that they were more a rival party to Winthrop's because they mobilized direct political action around a competing concept of church and state organization that undermined the very assumptions the Bay Colony clergy and court entertained about commonwealth government, a view that held sway among elites everywhere in Europe. The democratic thrust and popular currency of the Hutchinsonian challenge emerged when like-minded spiritists, drawn together by charismatic figures, organized collectively to transform the moral order as well as the ecclesiastical and civil institutions of the commonwealth. Although their "opinions" were dangerous concepts, opinions alone did not prompt the crack-downs sponsored by the Bay Colony. Only when the spiritists collectively organized and threatened to wrest control of the colony's civil institutions did their claims to liberty of conscience pose a real threat to the hierarchical commonwealth, and only then did the court and clerics act in response. Disarming the Hutchinsonians, disallowing Aspinwall and Coddington's election as deputies, and finally banishing antinomian leaders represented the court's systematic attempt to suppress concerted

²³ Although Chapin, Callendar, and Lutz' documentary histories have gathered valuable collections of court records and publications, and Gura, Lovejoy, James, and Greaves have written at length about the religious beliefs of the radicals, they have not attempted any extended analysis of their relationship to the politics practiced by the Rhode Island radicals. I have tried to provide a short discussion on this theme.

political action that threatened the deferential moral, social, and political order that they wished to preserve despite its lack of popular acceptance in the colony.

In establishing their own commonwealth, Rhode Islanders designed their constitution to accommodate an alternative, egalitarian conception of the moral law and civil sovereignty:

It was ordered and unanimously agreed upon, that the government which the body politic doth attend unto in this island and the jurisdiction thereof, in favor of our Prince is a democracy or popular government (that is to say) it is in the power of the body of freemen, orderly assembled, or major part of them, to make or constitute just laws by which they will be regulated, and to depute from among themselves such ministers as shall see them faithfully executed between man and man.²⁴

This compact unequivocally states that Rhode Island would not be governed by the will of aristocratically inclined men but by laws devised by an incorporated body of men. The freemen of the colony were its actual and not virtual legislators; they would form an assembly that enacted the laws “by which they will be regulated.” Elected representatives then served as mere stewards of the popular will by carrying out the laws; they were barred from legislative power, and thus could not define the public good according to their own judgments. This is what the authors of the compact meant by a “popular government,” a political institution designed to make the colony a commonwealth of laws secured from the arbitrary will of men.

While the democratic organization of the Rhode Island commonwealth only granted political rights to men, something even Anne Hutchinson did not challenge as far as we know, it assured that its other key provision, liberty of conscience, would be granted to all inhabitants in order to break the “outward bondage” of the civil authority’s

²⁴ Callendar, *Historical Discourse*, 213. Parentheses in original.

arbitrary intrusion in religious matters. It thus embraced a key component of radical reformation. The liberty of conscience clause reads:

It was further ordered by the authority of this present court that no one be accounted a delinquent for doctrine, provided it not directly be repugnant to the Government or laws established.²⁵

Rhode Island's "nursing father," John Clarke, wrote not long afterwards that man's

spirit, mind, conscience...this spirit and commander in men... is such a sparkling beam from the father of lights and spirits that it cannot be commanded over by men, devils, or angels.²⁶

The light of conscience was God's most precious gift to his creation; as the foundation of free will, it liberated the individual from the norms of society to live in accordance with the spirit of Christ. Therefore, the protection of soul liberty under the law ensured that the unfolding of truth through experience, borne out in part by expressions of popular political and religious dissent, remained free from the snares of magisterial suppression. In this way, religious toleration protected the sovereignty of freemen to actively participate in a popular government founded by saints bent on reformation. Democracy thus evolved in Rhode Island as an antidote to religious persecution and the usurpation of the people's spiritual and political sovereignty. Liberty of conscience secured through popular government consequently linked the saints' agency to a revolutionary transformation of manners, morals, religion, and civil society. This marked the evolution of increasingly radical commonwealth principles that relied on the virtue of the people to safeguard their soul and civil liberty; they would not rely on ministers or magistrates to do this for them. This was of the utmost significance in the

²⁵ Callendar, *Historical Discourse*, 213.

²⁶ John Clarke, *Ill News from New England* (1652), in Bercovitch, ed., *Tracts against New England*, 6.

mental world of saints who believed that their project of reformation would redeem humanity from its fallen state in the sacred script of millennial time.²⁷

Although the Rhode Island commonwealth took shape as a democracy, its gender exclusivity imposed limitations that alienated the colony's most important woman, Anne Hutchinson. While the liberty of conscience clause protected both men and women, only men could hold office and vote. In this light, it is especially interesting that Mrs. Hutchinson, along with several other women, questioned the need for any elected officials, trusting that the inner-light afforded by the holy spirit would guide the general will of the people to preserve the public good.²⁸ As a prophetess who had gained a large following by justifying her teachings as the voice of the spirit into her soul, this is not surprising. Perceived popularly as having special access to the Holy Spirit, she had acquired political influence rare for a woman of her time. In this context, her recommendation to abolish magistracy would enable her and her female supporters to perpetuate political power through prophecy. As God was no respecter of persons, many Rhode Island women other than Anne felt free to break from gendered norms of religious and political deference. Later we will explore Mary Dyer's career as a case study. But Rhode Island's men, despite their tutelage under Mrs. Hutchinson, granted themselves exclusive legislative power, illustrating the gendered limitations of radical commonwealth principles in the mid-seventeenth century.

The exile colony's radical possibilities coexisted with practical exigencies, particularly the Bay Colony's seemingly ungovernable appetite for Rhode Island land. This in turn inspired Samuel Gorton and Roger Williams to become outspoken critics of

²⁷ Nuttall, *Holy Spirit*, 102-117.

²⁸ Chapin, ed., *Documentary History of Rhode Island*, 2: 51-56.

the multiple forms of outward bondage that multiplied in the wake of Massachusetts' restless expansion.

After he was whipped and banished from Aquidneck, Gorton settled in Providence, where he quickly alienated the separatist residents. Gorton criticized their gathered church for excluding non-separatists from membership, as he disavowed any "carnal" distinctions between believers as "antichristian."²⁹ In October 1642, after the Gortonists made their objections public in the church and streets of Providence, a small party of residents led by Robert Cole, William Arnold, and Arnold's son Benedict put themselves under the civil jurisdiction of Massachusetts and appealed to the Bay Colony court to contain the faction. Gorton, it should be said, had acted obnoxiously towards the separatists who had sheltered them in Providence, criticizing Williams for embracing "antichristian" church ordinances. Williams himself wrote that Gorton's beliefs approached the "very depths of Familism."³⁰

Massachusetts would press this opportunity in Rhode Island by invading the colony and hauling the Gortonists off to Boston, where they were eventually enslaved for a brief period of time in 1643. The colony's motivations here were more complicated than simply defending separatists from "familists," hardly a compelling reason for the Bay Colony to act since it saw both groups as heretics. Francis Jennings has shed valuable light on this incident, arguing that Massachusetts, representing the most powerful member of the newly formed United Colonies (the Bay, Plymouth, and Connecticut settlements) had far-reaching objectives in moving against Gorton, ones that

²⁹ "Samuel Gorton," in Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds, *Dictionary of American Biography*, (New York: Scribner, 1972), 7: 438-439.

³⁰ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 280; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 94; Edward Winslow, *The Danger of Tolerating Levellers in a Civil State* (London, 1649), 55-56, 59-61; *Winthrop's Journal*, 2: 57-59.

most Providence separatists, including Williams, did not sanction. The Bay Colony court twisted the Cole-Arnold petition to claim that the entire settlement had placed itself permanently under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts.³¹ Besides ridding the region of the nefarious Gorton, seizing this land would add much of the Narragansett country to the Bay and Plymouth Colony patents; it would also keep Wampanoag, Mohegan, and Narragansett Indians from selling off land to Bay Colony exiles whose radical religious beliefs continued to infect other godly communities. The competition for land between the Cole-Arnold and Gorton factions complicated matters. Gorton pointed out in a letter to the General Court that the Cole-Arnold contingent had denied his people access to the Providence commons. He went on to observe that the Bay Colony employed the Cole-Arnold group as their chief Indian trading agents in Rhode Island. Criticizing their local foes for putting self-interest before the commonwealth, Gorton bitterly predicted that they would profit substantially if Massachusetts gained formal control of Rhode Island.³² Gorton's language became more immoderate, blasting the Cole-Arnold faction as "a company of gross dissembling hypocrites, that under the pretense of law and religion have done nothing else but gone about to establish themselves in ways to maintain their own vicious lusts."³³ The court replied that Gorton's patent was illegal since he had unjustly deprived local Indians of land, although Massachusetts' customary disregard for Indian land titles renders this disingenuous at best.³⁴ In actuality, with the help of Williams, Gorton had purchased the land he settled from Miantanomo, the Narragansett chief who had turned against the Bay Colony after the Pequot War.

³¹ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 262; Winslow, *Hypocrisie Unmasked*, 56-58; Gorton, *Simplicities Defense*, 23.

³² Gorton, *Simplicities Defense*, 20, 21, 39.

³³ *Ibid.*, 39.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

Shortly after he sent his letter, Gorton learned from both John Warner, one of Winthrop's many business partners, and Anne Hutchinson's son, Francis, just released from a Boston prison where he had spent time for blasphemy, that the Bay Colony was mobilizing to forcibly supplant the Gortonist faction, possibly by exterminating them.³⁵ Gorton removed his family and his followers to a tract of land that Miantanomo had sold to him called Shawomet, which Gorton made sure to secure "with the free consent" of the Indians living in the immediate surroundings.³⁶ Miantanomo had already angered the Bay and Plymouth colonies for selling disputed territory to both Williams and Gorton over the course of the 1630s. The court grew even angrier when it learned of Miantanomo's subsequent sale of Shawomet to Gorton, which fronted valuable real estate along the Narragansett River.³⁷ In November 1642, Gorton replied to further challenges from the Bay by stating that neither the court, nor Cole, nor the Arnolds had any rightful power to "inlarge the bounds by King Charles limited to you."³⁸

As the Narragansetts and the Rhode Islanders grew more determined to secure their holdings, the commissioners of the United Colonies invited Miantanomo to Hartford, ostensibly to hold a round of conciliatory discussions in September 1643. But the commissioners had secretly decided upon another course of action. They murdered Miantanomo once he arrived in town, hiring his old enemy, the Mohegan chief Uncas, to carry out the crime.³⁹ With this turn of events, Gorton recognized that he had lost a powerful ally. Resolved nonetheless to stay the course, he turned his wrath on the Bay

³⁵ Ibid., 22, 23.

³⁶ Ibid., 24.

³⁷ Ibid., 22; Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 262-265; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 95.

³⁸ Gorton, *Simplicities Defense*, 25.

³⁹ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 266; Perry Miller, *Roger Williams, His Contribution to the American Tradition* (Indianapolis, 1953), 51.

Colony, rendering their defense of Indian land claims as the work of “secret hypocrites” that “shall become open tyrants...their laws appear to be nothing but mere lusts.”⁴⁰ He and his followers “renounce(d)” the “diabolical practice” of the Bay Colony’s bid for territorial expansion, “being such as have denied in their public courts that the laws of our native country should be unnamed amongst them; yea those ancient statutes and laws.” Gorton asserted that “knowing ourselves to be free subjects to the laws and government of our native country,” they were justified in resisting the arbitrary rule of “any government extended out of its bounds of jurisdiction.”⁴¹ Unsurprisingly, the Bay Colony persisted in the face of this challenge, arguing that Pumham and Socconococo, Narragansett chiefs formerly under the clientage of the murdered Miantanomo, had come to them seeking protection against the Gortonists who they alleged illegally occupied their land.⁴² Gorton wrote that all his disputes with his Indian neighbors were settled in the “neighborly and loving way of arbitrators, mutually chosen among us.”⁴³

Five days later, the United Colonies mobilized the Massachusetts militia to attack the Gortonist settlement. The Providence separatists outside of the Cole-Arnold group opposed the Bay Colony’s initiatives, fearing for the security of their own titles. Roger Williams led an attempt to negotiate a peaceful settlement. The Bay militia dismissed this offer to parley and instructed the separatist commission that they could expect the same destruction Gorton’s group would shortly receive if they continued to interfere. Led by Captain Edward Johnson, the troops laid siege to Shawomet. The wives and children among Gorton’s followers fled to the woods, where several ultimately died of

⁴⁰ Miller, *Roger Williams*, 42

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 47.

exposure.⁴⁴ After enduring 400 rounds of shot, Gorton and his followers emerged, so he claimed, with the promise that they would go, as free, armed men to Boston to negotiate with the General Court. Why the militia would have agreed to this is unclear. Most likely the Gortonians surrendered. Beyond dispute is the fact that they were force-marched in chains to Boston after the Bay Colony confiscated their property.⁴⁵

Gorton's subsequent behavior in Boston illustrates the rage he felt due to Miantanamo's murder, his imprisonment, and the expropriation his land. His Boston trial also gave him another stage to articulate his radical views on religion and the sovereign powers of civil government. He reflected on the proceedings in the Bay Colony that had led to his earlier banishment in 1639. The Massachusetts court, according to Gorton, was "resolved to run that so the viciousness of their own wills might be a law unto them; yea they have endeavored, and that in public expressions, that a man being accused by them should not have liberty to answer for himself."⁴⁶ On trial in 1643, he recalled that, "we desired our writing might be heard in open court, that it might appear what was in it." This was denied, as Gorton wrote, because the charges against them "appear(ed) by the affirmation of the bench; for no other man or woman appeared to testify a word against us."⁴⁷ In the courtroom, Gorton instructed his judges that he would gladly "honor and respect" the court, but in this case he owed them nothing, since their procedures departed from both the form and spirit of the common laws of Old England.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Ibid., 51-53. The Rhode Islanders later testified to the legitimacy of Gorton's land claim as well as the details of the siege that Gorton recounted in the pamphlet. See *Simplicities Defense*, 61.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 46-52; Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 280-282; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 95-96; Shurtleff, ed., *Records of Massachusetts*, 2: 41, 46.

⁴⁶ Gorton, *Simplicities Defense*, 39.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 63.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 66.

In his speeches, Gorton would use appeals to the ancient constitution and antinomian spiritism interchangeably to challenge the proceedings of the Bay Colony court. He attacked the magistrates as Pharisees and usurpers, and charged them with governing arbitrarily and in violation of the traditions of freeborn Englishmen, an approach that he had used against Coddington in Aquidneck, and that the Hutchinsonians had used against Winthrop in 1638.⁴⁹ Gorton next argued that because the real, living Christ dwelled in all believers; each saint, unified with Christ the King, became a king in their own right, bound by “the law written on their hearts” to resist antichristian doctrines, laws, churches and courts. “To be a brother, and consequently a coheir in Christ,” Gorton proclaimed, “is a higher sphere than to be a civil officer.”⁵⁰ Any government that ruled without the consent of its people forfeited both its civil sovereignty and any pretense to preserving the common good in a Christian commonwealth. Furthermore, lectured Gorton, Englishmen who governed in contempt of the King’s laws committed treason; likewise, no court could claim sovereignty over the rule of the “new creature,” the saint regenerated in and united with King Jesus.⁵¹ As David Lovejoy notes, Gorton’s speeches so outraged John Cotton that he moved for his execution. Fortunately for Gorton, the General Court passed a less extreme sentence. He spent the next two months at hard labor, in chains, across Boston Harbor in Charlestown.⁵²

In view of these developments, Roger Williams anticipated that the Bay Colony’s new claims to the Narragansett territory would lead to the annexation of the Providence and Aquidneck patents. Fearing the worst, he set sail for Old England in May 1643 to

⁴⁹ Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 83-87.

⁵⁰ Winslow, *Hypocrisie Unmasked*, 43-45.

⁵¹ Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 83-87.

⁵² Gorton, *Simplicities Defense*, 73; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 96.

secure a Parliamentary charter for the Colony of Rhode Island.⁵³ Williams knew that he would be fighting a battle on two fronts: preserving liberty of conscience in his own colony while staying the aggressive expansion of the Bay Colony into both Indian and English settlements. Making his case before Parliament, he would face a rival in Massachusetts' Thomas Weld, who bearing out Williams' worst fears, had come to London to acquire a charter for the Bay Colony inclusive of Rhode Island. To discredit Williams and Rhode Island before the Presbyterian dominated Parliament, Weld found a London printer to publish the manuscript of John Winthrop's *A Short Story of the Rise, Reign and Ruin of the Antinomians*, a scathing masterpiece of heresiography targeting the former Hutchinsonians who now called Williams' colony their home.⁵⁴ This tract made sure to point out that the antinomians had failed to rally to the defense of the Bay Colony during their holy war against the Pequots, making their heresy, subversion, and sedition to appear almost bottomless.⁵⁵

In the spring of 1644, as Williams re-established contact with Henry Vane in London, Gorton, after his release from custody, held discussions with the Narragansetts about forming a unified front against the increasing encroachments of the Bay Colony. As the radical later recalled, Miantanomo's successor, Pessecus, along with "diverse sachems and their chief counselors" commiserated with the radicals about their common plight. The Narragansetts argued that the Bay Colony "had not only taken our estates from us in goods and chattels, but also our houses, lands, and labours..." According to Gorton, the Indians contended "that their condition might in great measure be paralleled

⁵³ Garrett, *Roger Williams*, 22.

⁵⁴ Hall, "Introduction to Chapter Eight," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 200.

⁵⁵ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 219-220. Thomas Hooker believed that Robert Baillie had a hand in assisting Weld's efforts to publish Winthrop's book. See Sargent Bush, *The Writings of Thomas Hooker: Spiritual Adventure in Two Worlds* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 80.

with ours, else they would willingly have done anything for our help, in regard that our land was bought of them, and we had faithfully paid them for it, according to our contract.”⁵⁶ The Narragansetts also complained of the ransom they had paid Uncas for Miantanomo, whom he nonetheless treacherously dispatched with an axe. Gorton found a way forward when he began to tutor his old friends in how they might counter Massachusetts’ designs by employing the counterweight of the common law, the liberties of which he argued applied to all of the King’s subjects, whether of white or red complexion. “We were,” Gorton told the Narragansetts, “subjects to such a noble state in Old England that however far off from our King and state...we should have redress.” The Narragansetts subsequently informed Massachusetts that they could never place themselves under their authority as they were “subjects unto the same King and State.” “Neither yourselves, nor we are to be judges; and both of us are to have recourse, and repair unto that honorable and just government of England...to be ordered and governed according to the laws and customs thereof.”⁵⁷ Through this new position, the Gortonists and Narragansetts rejected the Bay Colony’s jurisdiction by claiming the liberties of the common law. The magistrates of Massachusetts now confronted a nightmare: a unified front of “heretics” and “savages” on land that they coveted.⁵⁸ With this alliance forged, Gorton left for Old England with Randall Holden and John Green to secure an uncontested patent for Shawomet.

There is one critical aspect of this conflict that we have yet to examine, one that in particular had horrified Roger Williams. Williams had been growing increasingly

⁵⁶ Gorton, *Simplicities Defense*, 89.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 89-92.

⁵⁸ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 272-273; Gorton, *Simplicities Defense*, 93-94; John Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, in New England* (Providence: 1856-1865) 1:136-138.

concerned about the vacuum of power left by Miantanamo's murder, particularly the rising tension between the Mohegan and Narragansett tribes. He believed that the rivalry might erupt into a full-scale war, and he warned the United Colonies during the Gorton controversy not to use the divide-and-conquer policy tactics among the tribes that had led to the carnage of the Pequot War. The United Colonies had fanned the flames of conflict by employing Mohegan troops during the Shawomet siege, blatantly abetting Mohegan encroachment upon Narragansett land. Perhaps this act of war compelled Williams to intervene as a mediator during the confrontation. Remembering the devastation of the Pequot War and foreseeing the future destruction that would surely result in a joint Mohegan-United Colony offensive against the Narragansetts (and their sectarian allies), Williams urged the commissioners before he left for England to strike a tone of "loving mediation or prudent neutrality" in their affairs with each tribe.⁵⁹

In 1645, the United Colonies adroitly and with great duplicity seized upon this communiqué as a pretext for a pre-emptive war against the Narragansetts, twisting Williams' words to claim that he had warned them that the Indians "breath out threatenings, provocations, and war against the English themselves."⁶⁰ Williams' letter actually cautioned the colonial commissioners that the Mohegans and Narragansetts were prepared to do battle with each other. The subsequent declaration of war by the United Colonies put the Narragansetts on the defensive, for they knew from the Pequot Wars that an Indian tribe, unprotected by allies, could be virtually exterminated.⁶¹ Fearing their

⁵⁹ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 274.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 274-275.

⁶¹ Although the Providence settlers supported the Narragansetts, their combined strength was no match for the armed might of the United Colonies.

wholesale liquidation, the Narragansetts signed a treaty with the United Colonies ceding them large tracts of land and heavy tributes of wampum.⁶²

Shortly before threatening the tribe, Winthrop received a letter from his brother-in-law, Emmanuel Downing. As the letter indicates, Downing knew of the United Colonies' machinations against the Narragansetts. He argued that such a war could yield a windfall in profits from sources other than conquered land. Downing wrote, "If upon a just war the Lord should deliver them unto our hands, we might easily have men women and children enough to exchange for Moors." "This will be more gainful pillage for us then we conceive" exclaimed the West Indian planter, envisioning the future profits of a lucrative Indian-African slave trade.⁶³

Downing did not let this avarice get the better of his reason, for he knew that Massachusetts would have to put a godly face on slavery. His caution concerning a "just war" is instructive; according to Massachusetts and Biblical law, captives taken in righteous wars could legally be sold into slavery. As the work of Edward Johnson, Thomas Weld, John Winthrop, and Edward Winslow attests, well-written revisions of history helped the godly justify their crackdowns against heretics and their wars of conquest against Indians. Regarding the Indian wars, these histories played well to English brethren who, looking forward to the conversion of New England's natives, would find it disturbing that they were being destroyed for the sake of profit.⁶⁴ Once it

⁶² Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 274-275.

⁶³ Emmanuel Downing to John Winthrop, (August 1645), in *The Winthrop Papers* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929), 5: 38-39.

⁶⁴ For examples, see the following works, all cited above: Edward Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence* (London, 1654); Thomas Welde, *A Brief Narration of the Practices of the Churches in New England* (London, 1645); John Winthrop, *A Short Story* (London, 1644); Edward Winslow, *Hypocrisie Unmasked* (London, 1646) and *The Danger of Tolerating Levellers* (London, 1647).

was clear that New England would have to publicize Indian wars in ways acceptable to English audiences, Downing went on to describe the boons of slavery. “And I suppose you know very well,” he wrote, implying that Winthrop was well-versed in the economics of slavery, “how we shall maintain 20 Moors cheaper than one English servant.”⁶⁵ The savings accrued by maintaining a slave labor force, as Winthrop knew, would reduce production costs by circumventing the high wages that had resulted from colonial labor scarcity. This formula, of course, would expand the profit margins of landowners whose holdings would increase with each successive war of conquest. Downing construed this as both an immediate and long-term economic necessity,

for I do not see how we can thrive until we get into a stock of slaves sufficient to do all our business, for our children’s children will hardly see this great continent filled with people, so that our servants will still desire freedom to plant for themselves, and not stay but for very great wages.⁶⁶

As perpetual slaves, the “Moors” Downing spoke of would not enter into the market for land, thus assuring New England’s first generation that its progeny would see increasing concentrations of land ownership, instead of its increasing subdivision after a generation of white indentured servants received their freedom and promised property.

As Governor Winthrop contemplated the potential profits of an African-Indian slave trade, Rhode Islanders had to contend with the consuming ambition of their own governor, William Coddington. John Clarke had viewed Coddington with increasing skepticism since his chaotic confrontation with the Gorton-Hutchinson faction. Events over the course of the 1640s would prove his suspicions correct. With Rhode Island’s exclusion from membership in the United Colonies, Coddington watched jealously as the

⁶⁵ Ibid., 38-39.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 38-39.

respective members increased their economic power through their combined strength. Knowing that the Bay Colony exercised the most power in the organization, Coddington began a rapprochement with Winthrop about a possible union between Rhode Island and Massachusetts that would bolster Rhode Island's commercial ties with the United Colonies. Playing to Winthrop's prejudices in a letter written during the Gorton controversy of 1642-43, Coddington also blamed heterodoxy for many of New England's social problems. Clarke and his many supporters on the island resented Coddington's rising political influence, which grew exponentially after he returned in 1651 from a two-year trip to England where he had obtained a new charter proclaiming him governor for life. The new charter ran against the settlement's democratic constitution and laid aside Aquidneck's previous association with Roger Williams' colony at Providence, a source of strength for Clarke's faction, given their shared dedication to preserving freedom for religious heterodoxy.⁶⁷

Clarke feared that Coddington's alliance with the Bay Colony would make forfeit Rhode Island's hard-won liberty of conscience. Having founded his own church in Newport, Clarke ministered to a heterodox congregation and encouraged the laity to share his pulpit.⁶⁸ Although contentious debates over adult baptism made it difficult, Clarke had managed to keep his congregation intact. He also began developing more extensive contacts with radicals back in Coleman Street Ward, including a friend from the Hutchinson conventicle, Hanserd Knollys. Knollys had returned to London in 1641, and like Clarke, had arrived at a firm belief in the necessity of adult baptism. He found

⁶⁷ King, *Summer Visit*, 16-18; James, *John Clarke*, 22-31; Palfrey, *History of New England*, 2: 346-349.

⁶⁸ James, *John Clarke*, 22-31.

ready listeners among Samuel How's former congregants.⁶⁹ Clarke's trans-Atlantic network extended into provincial England as well, where he struck up a lifetime collaboration with Knollys' friend, Robert Bennett, a Baptist from Somerset.⁷⁰ Working with Roger Williams, Knollys, and Bennett, Clarke would do much to establish the first Baptist churches in Old and New England. Propagating the Baptists' gospel in New England, however, meant establishing closer ties with radicals who had remained in Massachusetts, certainly a dangerous game given the watchful eye of the General Court.⁷¹

Clarke's actions in the face of this predicament illustrated the courage of his convictions. As a former member of the Hutchinson faction, he understood the General Court's harsh disposition toward heterodoxy that had only grown in scope since the Antinomian Controversy of 1638. The magistrates passed an ordinance against adult baptism in 1644, a practice that Roger Williams had accepted in his church that very year. True to form, the court zealously prosecuted the new law, ordering Thomas Painter in Hingham whipped for refusing to baptize his newborn son.⁷² In 1648, the Bay Colony clergy expanded its attack on heterodoxy with the publication of the *Cambridge Platform*, a doctrinal treatise that condemned lay prophecy in an attempt to define godly orthodoxy.⁷³ Given this context, a possible Massachusetts-Rhode Island confederation

⁶⁹ White, "Hanserd Knollys," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 2: 161-162; B.R. White, *Hanserd Knollys and Radical Dissent in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Dr. Williams' Trust, 1977).

⁷⁰ B.R. White, "Two Letters from John Clarke to Robert Bennet," *Baptist Quarterly* 27 (1977-78), 142-148.

⁷¹ Ibid., 142-14; B.R. White, "The English Career of John Clarke," *Baptist Quarterly* 1 (1923), 368-72.

⁷² King, *Summer Visit*, 34.

⁷³ James, *John Clarke*, 37; Foster, *Long Argument*, 171-172; Hall, *Faithful Shepard*, 115-120; Richard Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 150, 207-208.

contained catastrophic possibilities for Clarke and his church, which took lay preaching and adult baptism as articles of faith.⁷⁴

In July 1651, against this threatening backdrop, Clarke sought a confrontation with Massachusetts that would remind Rhode Islanders lulled by Coddington's economic arguments that union with the Bay Colony meant an end to liberty of conscience and popular government. With two of his most radical congregants, Robert Crandall and Obadiah Holmes, Clarke made his way to Lynn, Massachusetts, to preach to the handful of the town's residents sympathetic to his stance against infant baptism. In searching for trouble, Clarke could not have picked a better partner than Holmes. Notoriously ill-tempered and given to excessive drinking, Holmes had left his Long Island church under a cloud of controversy due to his obstinate stance against infant baptism. Clarke re-baptized Holmes and his followers, a move that Roger Williams found praiseworthy.⁷⁵

Once in Lynn, Clarke, Crandall, and Holmes decided not to interrupt the town's regular service, and instead chose to preach privately to their local supporters. Despite this, the three Rhode Islanders were immediately arrested and forced to attend the town's evening service, where in a traditional sectarian show of defiance, Clarke refused to remove his hat. The beadle removed it for him, and the next day the three Rhode Islanders were taken to Boston for trial. Placed under house arrest, they nonetheless insisted on preaching that the Bay Colony contained only false churches. During another

⁷⁴ Callender, *Historical Discourse*, 210-212; James, *John Clarke*, 41.

⁷⁵ Edwin Gaustaud, *Baptist Piety: The Last Will and Testament of Obadiah Holmes* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1994), 3-69; King, *Summer Visit*, 41-50.

service that the authorities compelled them to attend, the pair challenged a Bay Colony minister preaching in favor of infant baptism.⁷⁶

In Boston, the General Court convicted Holmes, Clarke, and Crandall of violating the infant baptism law and ordered a round of flogging for Holmes and Clarke.⁷⁷

Clarke's friends, against his will, paid a fine and had him released, although bail was not forthcoming for Obadiah Holmes, who suffered through a ruthless session with the hangman's cat o' nine tails.⁷⁸ After this brutal ordeal, Holmes exclaimed to the bystanders and court officials, "having joyfullness in my heart, and cheerfulness in my countenance...you have struck me as with roses."⁷⁹ What Holmes meant was that his persecution by a "false" government reflected the rectitude of his position and the glory of his courage in acting freely according to his conscience. Responding to Holmes' outburst, Governor John Endicott exclaimed in frustration that he would like to hang all the prisoners.⁸⁰ Undaunted, Clarke offered to debate any and all of the Bay Colony's ministers on the issue of infant baptism. None of the clerics accepted Clarke's challenge. Roger Williams would later condemn John Cotton in print for his part in the affair, which he offered as further proof that the Bay Colony churches were not true churches of Christ.⁸¹ Clarke, Holmes, and Crandall returned home after offering themselves as sacrifices for the cause of liberty of conscience and the public good of the Rhode Island colonies.

⁷⁶ Gaustaud, *Baptist Piety*, 3-69; James, *John Clarke*, 45-49; Palfrey, *History of New England*, 2: 350-353.

⁷⁷ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 119; James, *John Clarke*, 47-48.

⁷⁸ Clarke, *Ill News from New England*, 45-52.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 45-52; James, *John Clarke*, 48.

⁸⁰ Clarke, *Ill News from New England*, 45-52; James, *John Clarke*, 49-50.

⁸¹ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 353, fn 52.

Although Clarke calculated that his trip to Lynn would inspire like-minded enthusiasts, the exemplary punishments the court had meted out to dissenters had succeeded, at least partially, by forcing dissent in Massachusetts into channels that sought to work with rather than uproot the existing government. By 1643, William Aspinwall had returned to Boston. The fiery deacon regained some lost prestige with his election as colonial notary in 1644. That same year, he befriended a new neighbor on High Street, the wine-cooper Thomas Venner, who had moved to Boston from Salem. Venner had managed to avoid trouble during the Antinomian Controversy, but his dissatisfaction with its outcome may be judged by his proposal to found a colony in Barbados in 1640. Venner, who most probably attended How's Coleman Street congregation, originally chose Salem due to the strong separatism of the congregation there. He probably knew many of the members from his days in London. Separatist principles at this time could have led to his decision not to join the Boston church when he left Salem.⁸²

Together with Aspinwall, Venner joined the town militia, which by 1644 united some of the town's most radical sectarians.⁸³ John Cotton's son-in-law, Wentworth Day, a recent convert to the adult baptism teachings of Clarke and Williams, joined Venner and Aspinwall in the ranks of the militia. Eight years later, Day, Clarke, and Venner would be preaching to their own congregations on Coleman Street. Other militia members included Israel Stoughton, one of the General Court's earliest critics. Although he later parted ways with Anne Hutchinson, he averted banishment in 1634 only by

⁸² Capp, "Thomas Venner," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 3: 268-270.

⁸³ William Aspinwall, *A Volume Relating to the Early History of Boston Containing the Aspinwall Notarial Records from 1644-1651* (Boston Municipal Printing Office, 1903), i-ix; Charles Banks, "Thomas Venner: The Boston Wine-Cooper and Fifth Monarchy Man," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 47 (1893), 437-444. The militia eventually became known as the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, and remains in existence to this day. See G. Goold Walker, *The Honourable Artillery Co. 1537-1926*, 41-43.

apologizing for writing a tract that criticized magisterial regulation of religious expression. John Winthrop's son Stephen also served, and seems to have been affected by his radical associates in the militia. He kept close company with "ranter" after returning to Old England to fight in Civil War. In total, six of the militia's twenty-four members had been banished during the Antinomian Controversy, and probably more than that had voluntarily left the Bay during the Crisis.⁸⁴

Besides the close order drills, knowledge of weaponry, and military tactics that the men learned, the company took what political action it could to carve out a space for liberty of conscience within the colony.⁸⁵ For instance, the militia organized several petitions for wider toleration in the late 1640s, although they were worded more mildly than Aspinwall's blazing manifesto on behalf of Wheelwright. The militia also petitioned to strengthen dissenters' rights to purchase land, as the Bay Colony now included property ownership as well as church membership in its criteria for the electoral franchise. Although the General Court turned a deaf ear to these initiatives, they received considerable support in the First Church, a congregation already predisposed to heterodoxy.⁸⁶ Outside of the Boston militia, other radicals continued to agitate against the court's restrictions on religious devotion. William Pynchon of Springfield, who argued alongside the militia for liberty of conscience, offers an excellent example. The Court ordered the public hangman to burn all copies of his book, *The Meritorious Price of Christ's Redemption* (1650), which argued that Christ had died for the salvation of all

⁸⁴ Louise Breen, "Religious Radicalism in the Puritan Officer Corps: Heterodoxy, the Artillery Company, and Cultural Integration in Seventeenth-Century Boston," *New England Quarterly* 68 (1995), 6, 7, 19.

⁸⁵ Breen, "Religious Radicalism," 3-43; G.A. Raikes, *The History of the Honorable Artillery Company* (London: Richard Bentley and Sons, 1878), 334.

⁸⁶ Breen, "Religious Radicalism," 6-24; Walker, *Honourable Artillery Co.*, 43.

humanity.⁸⁷ Back on Coleman Street, John Goodwin had started to preach on the same theme.

The struggle to achieve liberty of conscience became the organizing principle for collective, radical political action during New England's early years; fundamentally protean, this liberty emboldened radicals to confront other forms of outward bondage in colonial society. The combination of experience, inspiration, and revelation, shared in fellowship by a community of saints, shone new light on the dark chains of outward bondage. For many of the radicals, this meant that the struggle for liberty of conscience would come to include opposition to the forced conversion and conquest of Native Americans. Overtime, this situation produced a dialectic of radical colonial politics, where the state's attempts to limit the latitude of devotional practice strengthened the antinomian and separatist conviction in liberty of conscience. The same inverse relationship developed concerning Indian affairs; as colonial appetite for Indian land increased, so too did the radical understanding of the inequities of economically motivated Indian conquest.

The case of Roger Williams is again instructive, particularly his distrust of the Bay Colony Indian missionary John Eliot, who fomented war between his 'praying Indians' and the "pagan" Naragansetts over the course of the 1640s and early 1650s.⁸⁸ Eliot had organized missionary villages in the Bay Colony to convert local natives who then dispersed from the settlement to proselytize among other Indians.⁸⁹ Although it is unclear if Eliot was to blame, this led to conflicts between "praying Indians" and the

⁸⁷Louise Breen, "Religious Radicalism," 6, 7, 19, 24; Raikes, *History of the Honorable Artillery Company*, 334.

See Gura, *Sion's Glory*, Chap. 11 for an extended treatment of Pynchon's religious ideas.

⁸⁸ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 248-249.

⁸⁹ Oberg, *Dominion and Civility*, 125-127.

Narragansetts of Rhode Island. As a witness to these destructive conflicts, Williams did what he could to protect the Narragansetts. In fact, when he returned to England in 1652 with John Clarke to secure Rhode Island's charter against the designs of William Coddington, he carried a Narragansett petition to Parliament. It asked that the Indians

might not be forced from their religion, and for not changing their religion be invaded by war. For they said they were daily visited with threatenings by Indians that came from about Massachusetts, that if they would not pray they would be destroyed by war.⁹⁰

In the petition, Williams compared the Bay Colony's disingenuous justifications for conquest to the peaceable kingdom he claimed to enjoy with the Narragansetts. It led him to speak with incredulity at the carnage these onslaughts visited on his Indian friends, asking, "how it can suit with Christian ingenuity to take hold of some seeming occasion for their destruction?"⁹¹ In this critique of colonial conquest, Williams would have reflected on the pretext for the Pequot War, where the Bay Colony justified its offensive as a righteous crusade to avenge the death of a banished drunkard and philanderer. He also would have recalled the murder of Miantanamo and the Bay Colony's subsequent acquisition of vast tracts in the Narragansett country.

Both Gorton and Williams were appalled by the forced conversions that often followed colonial wars of conquest against Native Americans. "Forcing of conscience is soul-rape," wrote Williams, who explained that Christ himself "commands tolerance of anti-Christians."⁹² As the wording of the petition that he presented to Parliament on behalf of the Narragansetts indicates, Williams wanted to bring the full force of the English government to bear on both the mercenary conquests of Indians and the equally

⁹⁰ Lafantasia, ed., *Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 2: 409-410. Stavely, "Enclosed Gardens," in Bremer, ed., *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives*, 265-270.

⁹¹ Bartlett, *Records of Rhode Island*, 6: 271; Grinde and Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty*, 88.

⁹² Grinde and Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty*, 87.

mercenary designs of Eliot's praying Indians. Gorton, like Williams, found forced conversions to be tyrannical perversions of Christian charity.⁹³ Both men were particularly struck by the way local sachems honored the diversity of spiritual beliefs in Narragansett culture. Unlike the magistrates of the United Colonies, the Narragansetts made no attempt to increase their own power by proscribing any type of religious conformity among their subjects. Williams noted that the "civil commonwealth" and "spiritual commonwealth" in Narragansett culture were "independent of one another...the very Indians abhor to disturb any conscience at worship."⁹⁴ Samuel Gorton and John Clarke followed the same principle in their own settlements with respect to native and colonist alike.

Godly radicals came to see Indian conquest and forced conversions as forms of outward bondage that obstructed the progress of the Kingdom of God on earth. If the saints became antichristian tyrants, how could reformation proceed? This recognition reflected their growing understanding of the common humanity shared by settler and native. "It is granted," wrote Williams, "that nature's light discovers a God...as we see in the Indians."⁹⁵ This also illuminated what must have been a more startling discovery, that observing the moral integrity of their "heathen" neighbors often highlighted the deficiency of Christian love among the English in their own commonwealths.

Nobody learned these lessons better than Roger Williams. Williams was a student and an admirer of the Narragansett Indians, and labored in his book *A Key to the Language of America* (1643) to translate their language into English, a massive

⁹³ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 248-249; Joshua Micah Marshall, "A Melancholy People: Anglo-Indian Relations in Early Warwick, Rhode Island, 1642-1675," in Vaughan, ed., *New England Encounters*, 83-86.

⁹⁴ Grinde and Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty*, 87.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

undertaking and a scholarly achievement in its own right. What emerged was a striking portrait of the Narragansetts' human dignity and cultural achievements. Williams believed that breaking down communication barriers between the two peoples would make it more difficult for settlers to objectify Native Americans as satanic threats to godly religion, or worse, as stubborn obstacles to economic expansion. Williams studied the Narragansetts due to his intrinsic interest in their culture, and in the hope that he might persuade them to convert by showing how their own spiritual beliefs converged with Christianity.

On the other hand, Williams' found that emulating the Narragansett concept of selflessness could bolster the piety of his fellow Christians. He saw that the Narragansetts, like good Christians, struggled to overcome their own ego to free themselves from the inward bondage of sinful self-seeking. "I could never discern that excess of scandalous sins amongst them, which Europe abounded with...a man shall never hear of such crimes amongst them as robberies, murders, adulteries..."⁹⁶ The Narragansetts, according to Williams, tried to cultivate a cultural spirit of magnanimity through their hospitality to strangers. He spoke of their "remarkably free and courteous" generosity, which "all strangers" would receive. Undoubtedly this observation drew from his own experience with Narragansett kindness during his epic march into exile during the winter of 1636. To Williams, Narragansett culture contained the "savour of civility," as "a man shall generally find more entertainment among these barbarians, then amongst a thousand that call themselves Christians."⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Williams, *A Key*, 104.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, 104; Also quoted in Staveland, "Enclosed Gardens," in Bremer, ed., *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives*, 266.

By overcoming absorption in the self, the Narragansetts believed that they could break other forms of outward bondage that harmed the community. “There were no beggars amongst them,” Williams wrote of the Narragansetts, “nor fatherless children unprovided for.”⁹⁸ He contrasted this parallel with practical Christianity against the self-seeking rampant among the godly ruling-class, something he saw as “monstrous and terrible because without bounds or limits...a terrible beast...that spits and spreads fire, and sets towns on fire and the whole colony also.” “What God could that be,” wrote Williams speaking from the Indian vantage point, “that is followed by such extortioners, cheaters and liars?”⁹⁹ Seeing the spirit of selflessness at work among his Indian neighbors, which he likened to the spirit of Christ, Williams understood that the physical security of the English settlers, their economic prosperity, and the propagation of the Gospel did not depend upon the liquidation of the native population. “I humbly pray for your consideration,” wrote Williams, “whether or not it only be possible, but very easy to live and die in peace with the natives of this country?”¹⁰⁰ Religious toleration and a spirit of selflessness served as the keys to this peaceable kingdom. The greed behind the devastation of the Indians, Williams recognized, rendered the godly’s “errand into the wilderness” a cloud without rain, a hollow husk that had lost its seed. When the Providence leader returned to London in 1652 carrying his petition for the Narragansetts, he would find London radicals speaking the same language in their condemnations of Oliver Cromwell’s imperial conquests.

⁹⁸ Grinde and Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty*, 84.

⁹⁹ LaFantasie, ed., *Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 2: 599.

¹⁰⁰ Grinde and Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty*, 88.

Writing from England in 1654, Williams said, “I have often been charged with folly for that freedom and liberty which I have always stood for.”¹⁰¹ Unlike the popular strain of antinomian egalitarianism that competed with the court and clergy’s hierarchical vision of reformation, enlightened views like the ones Williams held toward native Americans were unfortunately rare, although the Rhode Islanders did at least share his conviction that Indians should not be forced to convert or that they represented a satanic threat that could only be undone by wars of conquest. Although Gorton’s understanding of Narragansett culture paled in comparison to Williams’, both men nonetheless found that their Native American neighbors acted in greater accord with Christian moral teachings than many of their fellow Englishmen in the Bay Colony.¹⁰² Williams wrote, “Hath not the God of peace and father of mercies made these natives more friendly in this, than our native countrymen in our own land to us?”¹⁰³ Observing how a supposedly “savage” culture maintained internal harmony through the separation of civil and spiritual affairs only reinforced Gorton and Williams’ conviction that liberty of conscience was a natural right.

Compare these conclusions to the views that John Winthrop developed in the “wilderness.” Winthrop was, to say the least, a complex man. The avarice of market relations and the grinding poverty of his English neighbors distressed Winthrop as much as the church’s lack of reforming zeal. He helped charter and settle the Bay Colony as an errand of reform, Christian charity, and material increase. He hoped that organizing the project along these lines would form the “perfect bond of love” that would “knit” the

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, 86.

¹⁰² Stavely, “Enclosed Gardens,” in Bremer, ed., *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives*, 265-270. Williams, *A Key*, 97-104, 203; Davis, “Roger Williams among the Narragansett Indians,” 593-604; Gorton, *Simplicities Defense*, 93-94.

¹⁰³ Grinde and Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty*, 88.

commonwealth together in the face of the ordeals to come. He detested greed when it disrupted the harmony of the colony, as his zealous prosecution of the usurious merchant Robert Keayne demonstrates.¹⁰⁴ Winthrop had viewed the inequitable social consequences of economic self-seeking with disgust in England, where he grew increasingly distraught because men no longer could sustain themselves on their estates due to land scarcity and the fluctuations of the market.¹⁰⁵ In America, the abundance of land could remedy this material crisis, although as we have seen, Winthrop chose the route of conquest to accomplish the end of preventing poverty among the godly. This method, of course, precluded the possibility of extending Christian love to Native Americans in any consistent way. Winthrop came to view the natives not as fellow creatures, but as obstacles to providentially ordained increase. In contrast, Williams' and Gorton's advocacy of native rights and culture, conceptualized in relation to their own struggle for liberty of conscience, represented a growing recognition of the oneness of humanity and a profound understanding of the nature of justice.¹⁰⁶ This consciousness had not expanded through an academic dialogue with natural rights texts, but rather within the historical context of their life in America. There, as everywhere, they found both barbarity and civilization, which prompted a self-critique of both the holy and barbaric potential of the project of world-wide godly reformation. Their conclusions were clear. As Williams once remarked, Rhode Island had not been won by war, but by the power of "love."

¹⁰⁴ Bailyn, *New England Merchants*, 41-44.

¹⁰⁵ See Bremer, *Winthrop*, 147-170 for Winthrop's views on English poverty and how migration to America offered a ready solution.

¹⁰⁶ Joshua Micah Marshall describes the troubled colonist-Indian relations that eventually enveloped the Gortonist settlement. It seems that later settlers, outside of the original circle of Gortonists, came into increasing conflict with local Indians over the course of the 1650s. See his "Melancholy People," in Vaughan, ed., *New England Encounters*, 88-89.

This radical consciousness would also be applied to perhaps the most understudied aspect of life in colonial New England, chattel slavery. The enslavement of Native Americans and Africans afforded another, terrible example of the dialectic between profit-making opportunities in the New World and the increasingly complex ways in which radicals conceived of both outward bondage and Christian liberty. Although Massachusetts' *Body of Liberties* (1641) forbade "bond slavery," the practice had grown in the colony since 1630 when Samuel Maverick initiated a slave breeding experiment on his farm near Boston. Over the course of that first decade, different types of unfree labor in Massachusetts sometimes devolved into complete slavery.¹⁰⁷ By 1641, the Bay Colony Courts occasionally enslaved indentured servants for life for committing petty theft.¹⁰⁸ We have already seen how the Pequots who survived the Fort Mystic and other massacres were sold to slave traders from Providence Island. Once in the West Indies, the Pequots worked alongside Africans to build a fort designed to protect the island's lucrative tobacco plantations from Dutch and Spanish privateers.¹⁰⁹ The ships that carried the Pequots into slavery would return to Boston with a cargo of African slaves.¹¹⁰ The Narragansetts narrowly avoided a similar fate in the treaty they signed under duress with the United Colonies in 1645. In the first two decades of its existence,

¹⁰⁷ Bremer, *Winthrop*, 312-315.

¹⁰⁸ Shurtleff, ed., *Records of Massachusetts Bay* 2: 246.

¹⁰⁹ CSPC 1574-1660, 277; Kupperman, *Providence Island*, 165-177. Lorenzo Johnston Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620-1776* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942). The new fort notwithstanding, the Spanish conquered the island in 1641.

¹¹⁰ Greene, *Negro in Colonial New England*, 17. Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 91; CSPC 1574-1660, 296.

slavery became a visible feature of everyday life in the Bay Colony, and a key consideration for the Bay Colony in its wars of Indian conquest.¹¹¹

In New England, Indian and African slaves worked mostly as household servants and as field hands on small farms in order to fill the labor demands of the region's merchant and large landowning class.¹¹² The small-scale character of New England agriculture made slavery's development in the region much less extensive than in the large, centralized, cash-crop plantations of the Chesapeake and Caribbean. New England's agricultural production of foodstuffs remained less labor-intensive, and the northern climate proved uncongenial to tobacco, sugar, indigo and rice. But at the same time, New England's ship-building, timber, and agricultural exports, and its various merchant ventures all depended upon forging strong trading ties with the rapidly integrating Chesapeake, Caribbean, African, and European markets. New England shipped naval stores, textiles, and foodstuffs to the Caribbean. It also received shipments of sugar from the West Indies, which it refined and distilled into molasses and rum, which merchants then exported back around the Atlantic world. The region therefore depended directly upon slavery for the success of its own agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial enterprises. Thus, from the broken and scarred back of slave labor flowed the lifeblood of many New England fortunes.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Albert J. Von Frank, "John Saffin: Slavery and Racism in Colonial Massachusetts," *Early American Literature* 29 (1994), 261; Michael J. Fickes, "'They Could Not Endure That Yoke': The Captivity of Pequot Women and Children after the War of 1637," *New England Quarterly* 73 (2000), 58-81.

¹¹² John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 110-112; Edmund Morgan, *The Puritan Family* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 125.

¹¹³ Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 271-307; Newell, *From Dependency to Independence*, 72-83; William Weedon, *Economic and Social History of New England, 1620-1789* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1894), 1: 117-164.

The labor scarcity problem became more acute in the colonies during the 1640s as European demand for products such as tobacco, sugar, rum, and molasses steadily rose. As this market trend became clear, New England merchants recognized that large profits could be made in the burgeoning slave trade. As we have seen, Bay Colony factors had been trading slaves since 1638. By the middle of the next decade, despite some legal complications, New England's merchants entered into the Atlantic slave trade. Captain James Smith's lucrative sale of African slaves in Barbados marked the first direct slave-trading journey from Boston to Africa. This exchange, of course, further strengthened the already growing link between New England's economic fortunes and the cash crop, slave labor plantation economy of the Chesapeake and Caribbean.¹¹⁴ George Downing, a planter on Providence Island, remarked in a letter to John Winthrop that a slave's productive power would payoff the purchase price in a year and a half, a calculus of political economy that inspired both slave traders in New England and slaveholders in the West Indies.¹¹⁵

As witnesses to slavery's development in the Atlantic world, New England radicals rejected the growing practice. Springfield's William Pynchon, a believer in universal salvation in a colony of Calvinists, grew increasingly outraged over the existence of slavery in Massachusetts, and condemned the practice as antichristian. Pynchon might have taken heart from the example of the antinomian William Rishworth of Providence Island, whom the colonial government declared an enemy of the state for

¹¹⁴ The Court ruled in 1645 that "stealing negers" was against the "law of God," although the wills of prominent citizens like Robert Keayne reveal that African slave-trading and slaveholding took place without penalty. See "Memorandum and Documents," *New England Quarterly* 72 (1999), 119; *Winthrop's Journal*, 1: 380; Bailyn, *New England Merchants*, 114-116.

¹¹⁵ Greene, *Negro in Colonial New England*, 20-22; *Winthrop Papers*, 5: 43; Weeden, *Economic and Social History*, 1:149.

objecting on religious grounds to all forms of slavery.¹¹⁶ We have already seen how Roger Williams pleaded with Massachusetts authorities in 1638 not to enslave their Pequot captives. In the 1650s, he decried the growing practice of kidnapping Indians and selling them into slavery.¹¹⁷ Given this recent history, Gorton's opposition to the Bay Colony's Indian conquests almost certainly took into consideration that those who survived would be sold into slavery. The lash that left the scars on Gorton's back probably strengthened his resolve to aid the Narragansetts against their impending enslavement. As a wine cooper, the antinomian Thomas Venner outfitted ships with casks for the Atlantic trade in Madeira wine; he also became a partial owner of two ships himself, and he would certainly have been familiar with the growing Atlantic slave trade. Venner also knew that Massachusetts slaves were often trained in the kind of skilled craftwork that he performed as a cooper. Probably a mix between sealing up profitable business and a fear of the growth of unfree labor in the colony compelled Venner to successfully organize and lead Boston's coopers to petition the General Court for exclusive rights and uniform standards to guide relationships between masters and servants in the trade.¹¹⁸ William Aspinwall, who like his friend Venner would later write republican tracts in London that condemned "man-stealing," served as Boston's notary, a position whose responsibilities included verifying all of the commercial transactions in the town's busy port. This made Aspinwall the official witness to New England's deepening involvement in the slave trade. In his official capacity as notary, however,

¹¹⁶ Von Frank, 261. Pynchon's scandalous book in favor of religious toleration, *The Meritorious Price of Our Redemption* (London, 1650), was burned by order of the General Court in Boston's public market.

¹¹⁷ LaFantasie, ed., *Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 108-110, 191-94; Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 113.

¹¹⁸ Aspinwall, *Notarial Records*, 179, 189, 260, 326; Dailey, "Root and Branch," 120; Shurtleff, ed., *Records of Massachusetts Bay*, 2: 250-251.

Aspinwall used the court's power in a different way, to benefit unfree labor. Listening to unpaid seamen of the *Plough* describe the hazards and toil of maritime work, he paid them well-above their normal wages with colonial monies after Captain Thomas Gaynor refused to compensate the crew.¹¹⁹

All of these New Englanders would have been aware that some of their fellows earned or supplemented their livings through the practice of “man-stealing,” or selling captives into slavery. In a letter to Winthrop in 1638, Roger Williams noted that

The sachems to prevent the fears of their men in hunting or traveling earnestly desired... that the English might not imprison or transport away their persons (which the natives suspect) two of their men having been not long since carried away in an English ship from the Bay and two of their women the last summer.¹²⁰

Winthrop would not have been surprised to hear of this, for he had ordered such expeditions in the wake of the victory over the Pequots.

The radicals' clearest reaction against slavery, however, came during the 1652 session of the General Court of Rhode Island, elected by settlements at Providence, Warwick, Newport, and Portsmouth. The Bay Colony's exiles, reflecting on the growth of slavery in New England, wished to define their own colony against the starkest form of outward bondage that they had encountered during their time in America. If a magistrate's interference in religion constituted an unjust usurpation that diminished the people's liberty, then one person claiming outright ownership of another to aggrandize their own wealth and power would certainly qualify as an unparalleled act of tyranny. In 1652, with Samuel Gorton serving as “president,” Rhode Island's General Court abolished chattel slavery. The declaration read:

¹¹⁹ Aspinwall, *Notarial Records*, i-vi; Shurtleff, ed., *Records of Massachusetts*, 1: 253. Venner was also involved in a conflict with Gaynor at the same time as Aspinwall. Gaynor had attached a stay on the ship Venner had been building in a dispute over a debt. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of Massachusetts*, 3: 252.

¹²⁰ LaFantasie, ed., *Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 191-194.

Whereas there is a common course practiced amongst Englishmen to buy Negers, to that end they may have them for service or slaves forever; for the preventing of such practices among us, let it be ordered, that no black mankind or white being forced by covenant bond, or otherwise, to serve any man or his assigns for longer than ten years, or until they come to be twenty-four years of age...as the manner is with English servants.¹²¹

This is an extraordinary document that has received little to no commentary in the secondary literature outside of local histories of Rhode Island. With the passage of this law, the Rhode Island court intended to invest New England's enslaved Africans with the same rights that indentured servants enjoyed in England.¹²²

Far from excusing slavery on the grounds of a "just war," "heathen" status, or a racialized concept of inferiority, Rhode Islanders abolished the institution, revealing the radical potential of antinomianism in the New World. We know, however, that the seeds of this humanitarianism were sown in Old England. As Samuel How had proclaimed on Coleman Street, "God respects no man's person...so that no flesh should glory."¹²³ For Williams in New England, "All the sons of Adam" were of "one blood." Racially segmenting a labor force to exploit it more efficiently was to draw an antichristian distinction between the common creation of God; thus African, Native American, and English laborers, regardless of their religion or complexion, were equally entitled to Christian justice and the protection of the common law. To justify enslaving a fellow creature through an invented system of racial classification for the purpose of profit was to glorify the flesh, or the carnal appetites, in a way that elevated humanity's lust for "filthy lucre" over its love for God. "You do but glory in your shame," wrote John

¹²¹ Von Frank, "John Saffin," 258-259.

¹²² Ibid., 258-259.

¹²³ How, *Sufficiencie of the Spirit*, D.

Clarke to the Bay Colony court after seeing Obadiah Holmes whipped.¹²⁴ At about the same time in England, another antinomian named Gerrard Winstanley wrote,

we see proud Imaginary flesh, which is the wise Serpent, rises up in flesh and gets dominion in some to rule over others, and so forces one part of the Creation man, to be a slave to another; and thereby the Spirit is killed in both.¹²⁵

Drawing on Corinthians, antinomian radicals on both sides of the Atlantic praised another form of biblical glory, the Holy Spirit's illumination of the believer's conscience. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God."¹²⁶ The indwelling spirit thus made all of the believers prophets, charged by God to testify in their life's work against the inward and outward bondage of sin that obscured the light of love that could unite all in God. They saw themselves thusly as agents of the Reformation, which was itself a process of liberation. That the light of God within would someday break forth to the destruction of all antichristian yokes was taken as a prophetic certainty. This would be the day of jubilee, when the glory of God's mercy and justice worked itself out in temporal time through the struggles of the saints to redeem captives from the dungeons and shackles of the carnal world. "Glorying" in this way, write Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, "symbolized historical agency."¹²⁷

In abolishing chattel slavery, the Rhode Island exiles became agents of the jubilee. This marked an innovation in their Reformation-inspired conviction that the true end of commonwealth government consisted of liberating humanity from all inward and outward bondage. Protecting liberty of conscience represented the legal path to free men

¹²⁴ Clarke, *Ill News from New England*, B.

¹²⁵ Gerrard Winstanley, *The True Levellers' Standard Advanced* (London, 1649), 1.

¹²⁶ Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 83.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

from their own sinfulness. But the light of unfolding religious truths also illuminated how traditionally sanctioned human institutions like slavery might conflict with the law of God. Thus, in the radical construct of commonwealth freedom, liberty of conscience in America opened up the minds and hearts of the people to revelation -new truths that emerged from the combination of experience and inspiration. This is how antinomianism led radicals to become abolitionists once they came to know the face of slavery in America. By remaining open to new light as the keepers of their own popular government, antinomians could use the hammer of their commonwealth's sovereign power to break the chains of outward bondage. Godly government, according to the radicals, was in and of itself an instrument of a jubilee that helped saints free themselves from the slavery of their own sins and the sin of slavery that they imposed upon one another.

As believers in general redemption, the indwelling holy spirit, and a revolutionary egalitarian interpretation of the ancient constitution, American radicals held that slavery violated the foundational tenets of Christian justice and English liberty. But as persecuted and exiled dissidents, New England's radicals might have empathized on another level with the enslaved. Although on a much lesser scale, they too had been imprisoned, exiled, and whipped by an arbitrary force that used terror and violence to impose a state of perpetual obedience on its subjects. As we have seen, Narragansetts allied with the Gortonists because they saw themselves as the common victims of Bay Colony expropriation. Perhaps in this way America's antinomian radicals could also see themselves in the Indians and Africans that they encountered.

The radicals' concept of commonwealth justice did not remain a unique product of American experience; indeed, it also flourished among the Coleman Street conventicles that gave voice to the principles of radical reformation during the reign of Charles I. This reign, however, had exploded in the chaos of the English Civil War. The mobility and space of America that had allowed for radicalism to flourish in an exile community would be mirrored in England by the new freedom for experimentation in the vacuum of power that formed in the wake of the war. With the growing power of the godly party in England, New England's radicals became convinced that as antichristian yokes multiplied in the New World, the revolution of the English saints burned through them "like parchment in the fire."¹²⁸ This situation offered an opportunity for Rhode Islanders and Bay Colony radicals to secure themselves against the depredations of the General Court by appealing to sympathetic men like Henry Vane who now held power in Old England. It also produced an exodus of radical New Englanders eager to taste the freedom of religious tolerance in the land of their birth. In re-crossing the Atlantic, they hoped to forge new relationships with an ascendant godly party in Old England, which unlike the one in Massachusetts, appeared to embrace rather than rebuke soul liberty.¹²⁹ As they related their own struggles with religious persecution to other forms of outward bondage in America, so too would these radicals bring a broader, more far-reaching conception of godly justice back across the Atlantic with them, when they returned as saints changed by the New World to an England changed by revolution.

¹²⁸ Winstanley, *True Levellers' Standard*, 1. In this famous pamphlet, Winstanley warned that Parliament's victory in the English Civil War might yet produce a new kind of tyranny, where the "kingly power" of the "thieving art of buying and selling" would hold sway over the poor, who would be reduced to vassalage under the propertied and powerful of the godly party.

¹²⁹ For instance, Oliver Cromwell was at the forefront of the movement for "liberty of conscience" in England during the 1640s. See John Morrill, ed., *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (New York: Longman Press, 1990).

CHAPTER FOUR

“HELL BROKE LOOSE”: AN ATLANTIC HISTORY OF ‘ENGLAND’S TROUBLES’, 1638-1649

At the height of the English Civil War, the heresiographer Thomas Edwards and his Presbyterian allies found themselves fighting a two-front war that they had long expected but had hoped to avoid. From the first front came good news. By 1646, Lord Fairfax’s army had bested Royalist forces in two decisive battles, the first at Marston Moor and the second at Naseby. Ironically for the Presbyterians, looming victory produced growing anxiety about the second front, where the enemy within, Independency, still threatened to carry the day. The heresiographer Thomas Edwards likened Independency to a fountain of blasphemy, one that perhaps ran even deeper than the inkwell that the clergyman tapped to scrawl his hysterical harangues. Using another and more famous metaphor, Edwards compared Independency to a kind of “gangreana” that infected the English body politic with heresy and sedition. Complications arose with this condition when exposed to the contagion of American radicalism bred by the likes of Samuel Gorton and Roger Williams, who had returned to London in 1644. “Poor England,” sighed Edwards, “must lick up such persons, who like the vomit had been cast out of the mouth of other churches.” Now the nation had “become the common shore and sink to receive in the filth of heresy and errors from all places.”¹

In contrast, other saints like John Milton regarded England, and particularly London, as a haven and vanguard of godly revolution.

Behold now this vast City: a city of refuge, the mansion house of liberty...the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the

¹ Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana* (London, 1646), 2:70.

plates and instruments of armed justice in defense of beleaguered Truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas...others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement. What could a man require more from a Nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge...a Nation of Prophets, of Sages, and of Worthies?²

The changes wrought by war upon his native city inspired Milton to write some of the most stirring words of the century. London, far from a “sink” of “heresy and errors,” had become “a mansion house of liberty” for the boldest of the godly, the “instruments of armed justice” pledged to the fulfillment of “the approaching Reformation.”³

The possibilities for change made possible by the Civil War had made London a cosmopolitan entrepot, “a city of refuge,” attracting new combinations of saints from Britain and around the Atlantic world whose experiences and religious thought led them to embrace innovations, “trying all things” as Milton had had it, to promote political, social, and economic justice as the fruit of reformation. The godly factions feared by Edwards and his ilk contained veterans of the New Model Army and masterless men and women uprooted from England’s provincial corners by the dislocation of war. In the army and in gathered congregations, many had tasted the new freedom and empowered voluntarism of democratically-organized institutions.⁴ Others traveled to London from distant outposts around the Atlantic world, disillusioned with the course of reformation but buoyed by hopes that the Civil War might shake the Old and New Worlds free from their antichristian fetters.

² John Milton, *Areopagitica: A Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing* (London, 1644), 31.

³ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁴ Hill, *World Turned Upside Down*, 39-56; Keith Lindley, *Popular Politics and Religion in Civil War London* (London: Scholar Press, 1997), 130-157; Rosemary Weinstein, “London at the Outbreak of the Civil War,” in Stephen Porter, ed., *London and the Civil War* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 31-33. Weinstein calculates that from 1600-1650, London’s population nearly doubled, growing from 200,000 to 375,000.

Although fewer in number than the thousands streaming into London from the provinces, thousands of saints abroad had been abroad returned home, busy with the work of reformation. Their critic, a Reverend Elyman, wrote in a painfully sustained metaphor that the exiles were like cunning foxes, entering one hole as heretics and emerging from another as seditious rebels.

The sectaries may be properly styled foxes in this respect too: for the alarm was no sooner given here, but they flocked hither from New England, Geneva, Amsterdam and all the factious corners of the earth, where they skulked before... No sooner were the golden reigns of government broken, and so they might pester the whole Kindgom...the whole English world did groan, and could not choose but wonder to observe how soon it was overrun by sectaries...to see this ancient and honourable city so unawares turned into another Amsterdam.”⁵

Such heresiographical disdain toward sectaries does not, by itself, offer indisputable evidence concerning the cosmopolitan make-up of London’s sectarian community. But it does point the way to a significant, yet understudied aspect of English Civil War history: London, like Amsterdam before it, *had* become a refuge for trans-Atlantic religious radicals. In the 1620s and 1630s, thousands of English saints crossed the sea bound for the “New Jerusalem”; by the 1640s and early 1650s, this pattern of migration reversed, with thousands of New Englanders returning to the land of their birth.

It must be recognized that heresiographers categorized sectarian organization and belief in ways that did not correspond to reality. The Antinomian Controversy had blackened the godly credentials of New England to its Presbyterian critics, providing explosive fuel for heresiographical fires that tried to sear Independency into the public imagination as the gateway to unspeakable heresy. Upon the ashes of anarchy, communism, and libertinism, heresiographical incendiaries would erect the foundations

⁵ R. Elyman, *The Hunting of the Fox or The Sectaries Dissected* (London, 1648), 14.

of a mighty church and commonwealth, to secure a reformation where new godly power and manners left providential bonds of authority and deference intact. In actuality, heresiographers burned beyond recognition the actual religious and political programs of the Independents, many of whom also disdained the sects. Despite or perhaps because of their distance from the truth, heresiographers succeeded in fanning the flames of fear about the unsettled state of the Kingdom. Their ostensibly religious tracts crackled with lurid details, often projections of Presbyterian paranoia, to discredit their enemies. Historians have argued that in some cases heresiographers invented heretical groups to solder dissonant sectarian thought into an alloy of heresy to clarify the elemental threats that non-Presbyterian models posed to the national church, social order, and civil peace.⁶ In the end, heresiographers staged a political war in print through quasi-religious disputation to sway public opinion to their view of the post-Civil War church and state.

Given this, historians should employ extreme caution when mining heresiographies for evidence. But in the case of the trans-Atlantic radicals, as this chapter will argue, the heresiographers correctly observed that godly exiles did return from around the Atlantic world, and that their presence would be felt by both their enemies and supporters. Heresiographies thus can offer important clues for historians not as to the substance of Independent and sectarian belief and organization, but to the belief among Presbyterians that they faced a trans-Atlantic challenge to the post-war settlement they envisioned, one that rejected religious toleration and a fundamental overhaul of the ancient constitution.

⁶ For the classic exposition on the dangers of using heresiographical tracts as evidence of the existence and beliefs of radical sects, see J.C. Davis, *Fear, Myth and History: The Ranters and the Historians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), especially Chapters 1, 5, and 6, where Davis presents his most profound methodological critiques. Also see Scott, *England's Troubles*, 237-239.

Investigating American re-migration to Old England, this chapter poses several questions about how American experience informed radical religion and politics in London during the English Civil War. How did English saints themselves divide over the controversies that wracked the unity of the American godly? What impact did this have on debates concerning England's post-war settlement of church and state? How did radical views on liberty of conscience forged in New England affect these debates? Did liberty of conscience provide radicals in Old England with a cornerstone for commonwealth principles as it had in Rhode Island? Finally, given Coleman Street Ward's central place in the history of pre-Civil War opposition to the Stuart Dynasty, did it continue to serve as a center of godly politics during the Civil War? In addressing these questions, this chapter will advance an Atlantic history of radical politics during the English Civil War.

Before we begin, we must first address another question: Who were the men and women of London's sectarian community who had returned to Old England from distant points around the Atlantic world? John Canne, the moving force behind the underground sectarian press in Amsterdam, had returned to organize soon-to-be Baptist churches in London and Bristol. Half of the Boston militia, many of them banished as antinomians from the Bay Colony, joined the New Model Army to fight against Charles I. Hanserd Knollys, one of Anne Hutchinson's supporters, served as a chaplain in the New Model while one of Anne's former tormentors, Hugh Peter, did an about face, embraced toleration, and rose to prominence as one of the most zealous crusaders for the cause of soul liberty in New and Old England. John Winthrop's sons Stephen and Fitzjohn fought in the regiment of the famous Leveller, Thomas Rainborough. Henry Vane, another

former New Englander in the service of Parliament, called Stephen Winthrop “a great man for soul liberty,” much to the chagrin, one imagines, of his father. John Cotton’s son-in-law, Wentworth Day, would become a lay preacher on Coleman Street after serving as a cornet in Rainborough’s regiment. Previous to this, Day had stood shoulder-to-shoulder with William Aspinwall and Thomas Venner in the Boston militia in the early 1640s. Aspinwall and Venner would join Day in London during the early 1650s. Other notables among this returning wave of migrants included John Clarke and Roger Williams, who left Rhode Island with the Hutchinsonians William and Mary Dyer in 1652. Williams, as we noted in the last chapter, had ventured back to London before, in 1644, where he might have met Samuel Gorton in the Seeker conventicles dotting the Coleman Street Ward. William Pynchon, a critic of chattel slavery in New England and an author of radical tracts burned by order of the Bay Colony Court, set sail around the same time. In all, at least five hundred of New England’s men returned to Old England during the Civil War. Other scholars have put the total higher, estimating that one sixth of the male population eventually made its way back across the Atlantic, reversing the original direction of the Great Migration that had brought close to 20,000 people to New England before the outbreak of the Civil War.⁷

⁷ For reverse migration, see William Sachse, “The Migration of New Englanders to England, 1640-1662,” *American Historical Review* 53 (1948), 251-78; James O’Toole, “New England Reactions to the English Civil Wars,” *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 129 (1975), 3-17, 238-249; Barbara Dailey, “Root and Branch,” *passim*; Andrew Delbanco, “Looking Homeward, Going Home: The Lure of England for the Founders of New England,” *New England Quarterly* 59 (1986), 358-86; Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World*, *passim*; *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 2nd Series, 12 (1897-99), 21-211; R.P. Stearns, *Hugh Peter, The Strenuous Puritan* (Urbana, 1954); Breen, “Puritan Officer Corps,” 19-23; B.R. White, “Hanserd Knollys,” in Greaves and Zaller, ed., *Biographical Dictionary*, 2: 161-162; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 99-100; Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 223-224, 242. It should be made clear that many among the returning migrants scorned the sectarians. For instance, New England heresiographers Thomas Weld and Edward Winslow, and a majority of Harvard College’s first graduating classes left New for Old England during the English Civil War.

While controversy simmered in New England, the crisis facing the Stuart Dynasty had reached a boiling point by 1640. In 1639, two years after trying to force Laud's innovations upon the firmly Calvinistic Church of Scotland, Charles I faced the daunting prospect of fighting a Scottish army with an empty treasury. His personal revenue schemes having proved both insufficient and wildly unpopular, the clamoring among the nation's elite to address the chaotic state of the kingdom reached such a fevered pitch that Charles reluctantly called the "Short Parliament" of 1640. Not yet ready to compromise, the King unwisely dissolved the session, although the situation quickly grew worse and Charles reconvened Parliament in November 1640. Ostensibly, this Parliament would deliberate on the best way to fund what became known as the "Bishop's Wars" in Scotland.⁸ Calling two Parliaments in such close succession marked a dramatic shift in policy if not governing philosophy. In 1641, Charles announced that he would "lay down...what parts of my revenue that shall be found illegal," even though his power to levy such taxes had previously been upheld by English courts. Charles was weakening, and the Long Parliament shortly showed itself willing to exploit this opportunity by pressing for reforms in church and state.⁹

As the drama unfolded, Henry Vane's star arose alongside that of Coleman Street Ward aldermen Isaac Pennington, Samuel Aldersly, and Owen Rowe, all of whom were elected to the Long Parliament. Joining with John Pym, Vane and the Coleman Street Ward MPs gradually assumed leadership roles among members willing to confront the

⁸ The "Short Parliament" of 1640.

⁹ Conrad Russell, "Why Did Charles I Call the Long Parliament?" in Peter Gaunt, ed., *The English Civil War: The Essential Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 128-136; Glenn Burgess, *Politics of the Ancient Constitution*, 201-203; Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 156; see 149-160 for Russell's view on the debates concerning the monarch's constitutional powers regarding taxation.

court. In December 1640, London citizens presented Parliament with the Root and Branch Petition demanding the abolition of episcopacy. The following February, Parliament moved to prevent Charles from embarking on another period of personal rule through the Triennial Act, which mandated sessions every three years. In May, Parliament took an even bolder step by passing a bill that required the King to gain majority consent before dissolving a session, a direct challenge to the King's prerogative power. In June, Vane successfully proposed an amendment to the Root and Branch Bill calling for mixed lay and clerical governance of the church.¹⁰ Condemning church government by bishops as "rotten and corrupt from the very foundation of it to the top," Vane and his allies hoped that its abolition would secure the further reformation of the English church.¹¹ The London crowd swarming outside of Westminster seemed to endorse this view, judging by the raucous demonstrations that took place there to urge the bill's passage.¹²

In late 1641, the Stuart Dynasty's position rapidly deteriorated. In October, word came of the Irish Rebellion, where Catholics had risen and massacred Protestant settlers. Horrific though exaggerated tales of the carnage added a further element of highly emotional instability to the situation.¹³ Soon thereafter, Vane helped draft the Grand Remonstrance, which catalogued two hundred and four grievances against the Stuart

¹⁰ Violet Rowe, *Sir Henry Vane the Younger: A Study in Political and Administrative History* (London: Athlone Press, 1970), 191-194; G.E. Aylmer, *Rebellion or Revolution: England 1640-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 28-29.

¹¹ Charles Firth, "Henry Vane," in Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, eds., *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1917), 118.

¹² Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 156-161; Brian Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution, 1640-1649* (London: Heineman Educational Books, 1976), 21-45.

¹³ Ethan Howard Shagan, "Constructing Discord: Ideology, Propaganda, and the English Response to the Irish Rebellion of 1641," *Journal of British Studies* 36 (1997), 4-35.

Court. Charles refused to honor the petition.¹⁴ By December, this and the news from Ireland had confirmed the opinion of many of the English godly that a Catholic plot was underfoot that threatened both reformed religion and commonwealth government.¹⁵ Charles only made the already tense situation worse by stating, “I hope this ill news from Ireland may hinder some of those follies in England.” Many staunch Protestants took this to mean that Charles might welcome a massacre of those who determinedly pursued a “puritan” course of reform. Tensions reached a breaking point when the House of Lords rejected the Root and Branch Bill. Crowds of angry women and apprentices once again descended upon Westminster. Apprentices presented their own Root and Branch petition with 30,000 signatures. At the end of December, the crowds grew more restive, and briefly invaded Westminster Palace itself, demanding an end to the rule of bishops while threatening the lives of church peers and the MPs who supported them.¹⁶

On January 3, 1642, Charles made a bold and ultimately disastrous move. In breach of custom he entered the House of Commons to arrest Pym and his cohort. The King had resolved to rid himself of Pym’s power clique known to us now as the “Five Members.”¹⁷ Unfortunately for Charles, the Five Members had escaped, but he guessed

¹⁴ Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 191; Adamson and Folland, *Henry Vane*, 164-166. Adamson and Folland make a rather weak case that Vane could not have assisted in drafting the religious clauses outlined in Section 184, citing how he would never have endorsed such a rigid form of church discipline. They fail to account for the delicate political context in which the Remonstrance was written, as well as Vane’s political shrewdness. He would wait for a more politically opportune moment to endorse a radical, “independent-styled” church settlement in late 1644. For Vane, such a bold position would have undermined the fragile unity of the godly party as it coalesced against Charles during the critical days of November 1641.

¹⁵ M. Perceval-Maxwell, “The ‘Antrim Plot’ of 1641 – A Myth?” *Historical Journal* 37 (1994), 421-431; Jane Ohlmeyer, “The ‘Antrim Plot of 1641:’ A Rejoinder,” *Historical Journal* 37 (1994), 431-438.

¹⁶ Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 164-166; Manning, *Aristocrats, Plebians, and Revolution*, 31-36.

¹⁷ Aylmer, *Rebellion or Revolution*, 29-32; Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 117-128; Elizabeth Skerpan, *The Rhetoric of Politics in the English Revolution* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 60-61. The Five Members were John Pym, John Hampden, Denzil Holles, Sir Arthur Haselrig, and Sir William Strode. The King also sought the arrest of the Earl of Manchester.

rightly that they had fled to Coleman Street.¹⁸ Riding into the ward, Charles met an angry crowd of enraged merchants, guild leaders, tradesmen, and working poor from the neighborhood's back-alleys. The London crowd closed in on the Royal escort screaming, "Privileges of Parliament!"¹⁹ This forced a bewildered if not terror-stricken Charles to undertake a humiliating retreat back to Westminster. Two weeks later at the Guildhall, Isaac Pennington, the parliamentary hero who had helped to hide the Five Members on Coleman Street, was elected Lord Mayor of London by popular acclamation.²⁰ Charles had lost the city and fled the royal palace at Whitehall. The London crowd had won the first physical confrontation of what would become the English Civil War, and Coleman Street had taken center stage in the building drama.

In the midst of this crisis Sir Henry Vane demonstrated his skill as a political operative.²¹ June witnessed the passage of the Nineteen Propositions, a dubious overture to the King that really amounted to an effectual declaration of war. In a marked departure from precedent, the Nineteen Propositions explicitly enumerated the legitimate restraints that Parliament could exercise against monarchical power, an important step that strengthened its ability to legislate in coordination with the King. It is possible that Vane, with Henry Parker, co-wrote a reply to the King's cloudy answer to the Nineteen Propositions called, *A Political Catechism*, which deftly appropriated Charles' response to argue against royal legislation without parliamentary consultation.²² His experience

¹⁸ Henry Wheatley, *London Past and Present* (London, 1891), 1.

¹⁹ Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution*, 97, 100, 110-113, 139-43, 236.

²⁰ Ibid., 158; Clarendon, *History*, 2: 246; Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994), 75-76

²¹ Vane had been knighted in June 1640 due, at least in part, to his father's influence in the Stuart Court. Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 140.

²² For a discussion of *A Political Catechism*, see Corinne Weston and Janelle Greenberg, *Subjects and Sovereigns: The Grand Controversy over Legal Sovereignty in Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 154-157. For more on Parker, see Michael Mendle, *Henry Parker and the English*

with Winthrop and the Bay Colony Court, as well as with the Stuart Dynasty, informed Vane's conviction that left unchecked by a popular voice, monarchical or magisterial power to legislate civil and spiritual affairs led naturally to tyranny. "From this conflict of opinion over the most fundamental aspects of government," write Corinne Weston and Janelle Greenberg, "arose the constitutional controversy that marked the remainder of the seventeenth century."²³ In August, after several months of fighting to regain control of local militias, Charles raised his standard at Nottingham Castle and plunged the nation into Civil War.²⁴

The war brought unprecedented power to Coleman Street MPs. Isaac Pennington and Mark Hildesly became important backers of Parliament's army, and closed ranks against Denzil Holles' "peace party," a large faction of MPs who wavered in the wake of a string of early Royalist victories. Pennington, along with Vane, rallied support against Holles' group that sought peace negotiations with the King. Violet Rowe, Vane's biographer, has suggested that he helped to orchestrate the December 1643 London elections that secured a powerful majority for pro-war councilmen.²⁵ By cultivating ties with Pennington, Vane helped to build an alliance with influential Londoners dominated by Coleman Street aldermen. Pennington also helped initiate the House of Commons'

Civil War: The Political Thought of the Public's Privado (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Vane used the argument from *A Political Catechism* to defend himself at the Restoration against charges of regicide. He claimed that the Commonwealth regimes that he served under upheld the constitutional principles outlined by the King in his answer to the Nineteen Proposals. Many thanks to Janelle Greenberg for drawing my attention to Vane's constitutional thinking.

²³ Weston and Greenberg, *Subjects and Sovereigns*, 52; David Parnham, *Sir Henry Vane, Theologian: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Religious and Political Discourse* (Madison: Associated University Presses, 1997), 38, 43, 105.

²⁴ Adamson and Follard, *Sir Harry Vane*, 164-165; Manning, *Aristocrats, Plebians and Revolution*, 34-39; Scott, *England's Troubles*, 150. In orders to Royal troops, the King defined his cause against "Trayterous Brownists, Anabaptists and Athiests, who endeavour the destruction of Church and State."

²⁵ Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 29-31; For Vane's activities in the "war party," also see Ruth E. Mayers' "Sir Henry Vane the Younger (1613-1662)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-1005). My thanks to Professor Janelle Greenberg for drawing my attention to Mayers' recently published *D.N.B.* article on Vane.

attack on Laud, and from the scaffold, probably looked on with satisfaction when the Archbishop was beheaded for treason a year later. The Coleman Street MP Owen Rowe's career in Parliament deserves mention as well. He would go on to serve with distinction in the army that he had helped to create in the House of Commons, where he gave voice to the hawkish position that infused his Coleman Street constituency. But despite the decisive contributions of these men, the propaganda works of their pastor, John Goodwin, would do the most to radicalize the godly cause.²⁶

From the earliest days of the war, Goodwin's popular tracts helped steel the godly's resolve in the face of adversity. In *The Butcher's Blessing* (1642), he exhorted the rich, poor, eminent, and weak to defend London against the King's forces camped outside the city's walls. He made his case by appealing to the public spirit of all ranks to defend the city's ancient liberties, and cast the Royalist army as a mercenary force of free-booting cavaliers, ready to commit ghastly depredations against the city in the service of a tyrant whose arbitrary form of governance threatened to transform freeborn Englishmen into cringing, popish slaves.²⁷ Drawing on popular anti-Catholic hysteria, this book followed an earlier effort, a fifty-page tract called *Anti-Cavalierisme*, where Goodwin explained that a Royalist victory entailed the ultimate triumph of the Counter-Reformation. Although Holles' peace party claimed the King was ready to settle on advantageous terms, Goodwin wrote that estates, civil liberties, and reformed religion would be forfeit to the unrestrained avarice of the King's forces. Resisting the King

²⁶ Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution*, 324; Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 15-17, 51-55; "London and Popular Freedom," in R.C. Richardson and G.M. Ridden, eds., *Freedom and the English Revolution: Essays in History and Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 122; R.K.G. Temple, "Owen Rowe," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 3: 116-118; R.L. Greaves, "Isaac Pennington," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 3: 21-22; Rowe also had a son in New Haven, Connecticut caring for the family's property.

²⁷ J.C. Spalding, "John Goodwin," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 2: 16.

would not only preserve the religious and civil liberty of the godly, it would initiate a new counter-attack against the Counter- Reformation at home and on the Continent. In Christopher Hill's view, *Anti-Cavalierisme* was "the most effective work of Parliamentary political propaganda" written during the early years of the English Civil War.²⁸

Goodwin wrote the pamphlet with the kind of lurid detail perfectly suited for propaganda, but *Anti-Cavalierisme* represented more than just a well-written piece of political fear-mongering. Outlining justifications for resistance to civil tyranny through both the laws of God and nature, Goodwin effectively challenged the traditional ruling-class appeal to Paul's dictate in Romans 13.1 (let all men be subject to a higher authority) by stating,

the destruction of the Whore (kingly power) by Christians of inferior rank and quality...should be fulfilled or take place (once the) consciences of men should be loosed and set at liberty from the bands and fetters of those enslaving Doctrines and apprehensions, wherewith they had been formerly oppressed and made servile above measure, to those that were in place and authority over them.²⁹

Here, Goodwin made a case for the citizen's right to resist unlawful government, arguing that rulers who deprived their subjects of their natural and customary liberties reduced them to "slavery." This marked a dramatic departure from the hedging, conciliatory language of the 1630s, when, as John Morrill has shown, critics of the King rarely if ever questioned his sovereign authority. With Charles now in arms against them, the saints

²⁸ Hill, *English Bible in the Seventeenth Century*, 184.

²⁹ John Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme* (London, 1642), 31. Parentheses mine. Henry Overton, a member of Thomas Lamb's Bell Alley congregation, printed this and many more of Goodwin's books.

felt free to liken his rule to the Whore of Babylon, a tyrannical power that sold godliness for gain and oppressed the people with “enslaving doctrines.”³⁰

In this and other pamphlets, Goodwin used the term slavery not as a figure of speech but as a material description of the condition of those stripped of their natural rights by an arbitrary government. Later, John Milton would do the same in his own attempts to legitimate Parliament’s war against Charles I. Slavery was an unnatural condition that made resistance to it a natural right.³¹ In *Anti-Cavalierism*, Goodwin wrote,

Men that have no lawful authority or power to take away the lives or goods of men, may very lawfully be resisted in any attempt they shall make, and if their lives miscarry in such attempts...(as we say) their blood is upon their own heads.³²

Taking the case farther, Goodwin anticipated the grisly events of January 30, 1649 by justifying not only the overthrow, but the execution of kings when they threatened the lives, liberties, and estates of their subjects.³³ In this way, Goodwin argued that men of “inferior rank” had natural rights to execute justice on kings. This must have shocked the sensibilities of many English raised in the tradition that the King could do no wrong; many on Coleman Street, however, found his words inspiring.

Anti-Cavalierism can also be understood in a wider political context that sought to unify the different factions among the godly around well-defined principles of resistance. Goodwin, formerly an enemy of sects, politicized their concept that God was no respecter

³⁰ John Morrill, “Rhetoric and Action: Charles I, Tyranny, and the English Revolution,” in Schochet, ed., with Tattspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 91-114.

³¹ Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics II: Renaissance Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 292-297. See the entire essay entitled, “John Milton and the Politics of Slavery,” for a fuller treatment of the use of slavery in Civil War political discourse.

³² Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierism*, 16.

³³ For Goodwin’s contribution to the debates surrounding regicide, see Sean Kelsey, “The Trial of Charles I: A New Perspective,” *History Today* 49 (1999), 34-41.

of persons –the rule of law, made consonant with the law of God, leveled monarchs and subjects in their duty to preserve godly justice in the body politic. The tract deplored a language of rights to inspire the mobilization of large sections of the population who formerly, at least in the minds of elites, had existed outside of the political nation. The sects, made up largely of this population, had endorsed this egalitarian logic before the Civil War. Now godly clerics had politicized it to inspire commonwealth voluntarism in defense of the public good. As Parliament’s most influential call-to-arms, the tract catapulted the Coleman Street divine to a position much like the one Thomas Paine would occupy more than a century later within American revolutionary circles.³⁴

Goodwin’s leveling political innovations also embraced religious toleration. Without securing soul liberty in the war against the King, he believed civil liberty remained in peril. His support for religious toleration would put him at the center of the contentious disputes within the godly party about how to organize the new English church after the abolition of episcopacy. This in turn led to debates over what power the state would be given to enforce religious conformity. Saints addressed the issue of church settlement and toleration head-on in the Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643-1647). The debates in the Assembly would produce new factions among the godly and new labels such as “Presbyterian” and “Independent,” which in turn became shorthand for divergent views on church organization and tolerance.³⁵ As the war unfolded, the

³⁴ The firestorm surrounding Paine’s writing has been well-documented, while Goodwin’s can be easily measured through a keyword search on Early English Books Online. His tracts elicited close to one hundred, mostly hostile responses from 1640-1660.

³⁵ Robert S. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord: Politics and Religion in Westminster Assembly and the Grand Debate*; T. Clark and Edward Hetherington, *History of the Westminster Assembly* (Edinburgh, 1985); Deborah Hart Stock, “Thomas Hooker’s Journey through English Congregationalism to the New England Way,” *International Congregationalist Journal* 3 (2003), 55-76; Emerson, *John Cotton*, 35-63.

factional in-fighting among the godly would prove to be as divisive in Old England as it had been in the Bay Colony.

Assessing what “Presbyterians” and “Independents” (or Congregationalists as Independents came to be called in New England) actually believed is a difficult task. Presbyterians looked toward a national church devoid of episcopacy but doctrinally united and governed by a clerical hierarchy, a position not far from the New England churches that they would come to criticize so vehemently. English Independents, on the other hand, generally argued that the national church should consist of autonomous, gathered, Protestant congregations. The two groups, rather than distinct Protestant religions, were instead politicized factions that grew out of the Westminster Assembly, and each produced a pamphlet literature calculated to discredit their opponents within the godly party. In light of its origins, the pamphlet war thus tells us less about theology, and more about the political fears and objectives that each side entertained as they struggled to define the ultimate post-war settlement. Presbyterians thus excited both religious and political controversy by making the argument that congregational autonomy destroyed the church. Introducing an uncontrollable toleration, it would unleash both religious and political democracy, dissolving godly doctrine in the chaos of spiritual, civil, and social anarchy. Devoid of a hierarchy to command obedience to proper doctrine, Independency let loose man’s natural avarice in the guise of religious freedom, thus forfeiting the church’s responsibility to serve as a custodian of Christian truth and the civil peace. Thomas Lamb, a London merchant and reformed sectarian, wrote that a “flood of

prodigious errors” burst forth from Independency that worked towards the overthrow of the moral, social, and constitutional order of the state.³⁶

Presbyterians made the link between Independency, sectarianism, and civil sedition clear, and in the process put forth arguments against state tolerance of heterodoxy. Their first targets were their Independent enemies in Parliament and the Westminster Assembly, whom they conflated with the sects, both real and imagined, in order to destroy Independency’s political power.³⁷ In this light, Lamb asked, “Whence came the several sorts of Anabaptists, Seekers, Ranters, and that monstrous sect of Quakers? Do not all these sects shade themselves under the great Tree of Independency?” By “gathering churches” out of parishes, he claimed, Independents seamlessly degenerated into “downright Brownists.”³⁸ In *A Spiritual Survey*, Samuel Rutherford listed “Socinians, Anabaptists, fleshly Familists, antinomians, Arians, Arminians, antiscipturians, enthusiasts, and Seekers” as sects borne from Independency. He equated their beliefs with “downright atheism.”³⁹ A Presbyterian church preserved

³⁶ This Thomas Lamb was a merchant in the London neighborhood of Spittlefields; he was not the General Baptist preacher who held meetings on Bell Alley off of Coleman Street. R.L. Greaves, “Thomas Lamb,” in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 166-167. For toleration of Catholics, see William Walwyn, *Walwyn’s Just Defense* (London, 1649), n.p. and Roger Williams, *Bloody Tenet of Persecution* (London, 1644), 149-152; Hill, *Experience of Defeat*, 30; Norah Carlin, “The Cromwellian Reconquest of Ireland,” in Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield, and Willy Maley, eds., *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict, 1534-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 210, 213-214; Murray Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 94-97; Geoffrey Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), 2-15; Aylmer, *Rebellion or Revolution*, 62-65; Derek Hirst, *Authority and Conflict in England, 1603-1658* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 245-250.

³⁷ William Lamont, “Pamphleteering in the English Revolution,” in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 184. Discussing the heresiographers, Lamont is wrong to say that Edwards’ primary target were the sects. Edwards used them to blemish the credentials of his Independent enemies during the Westminster Assembly debates.

³⁸ Thomas Lamb, *A Fresh Suit Against Independency, or the National Church-way Vindicated, The Independent Church-way Condemned* (London, 1677), A4, 7,

³⁹ Samuel Rutherford, *A Survey of the Spiritual AntiChrist* (London, 1648), n.p. For a study of Rutherford’s religious and political thought, see John Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

order, unity, and sound doctrine, but “Independency hath been the way of envy, strife, schism and sedition.” According to Rutherford, Independency destroyed ecclesiastical conformity and “offered violence to all obligations, Sacred and Civil,” and “trod most moral precepts in the dirt, to preserve itself...”⁴⁰ “All errors take sanctuary in Independency,” Thomas Edwards wrote, and “fly there and are safe, as the chickens under the wing of the hen.”⁴¹ This made the need for a national church hierarchy clear while it also clarified the contingent duty of the magistrates to prosecute heresy. The “godly magistrate does not persecute the saints if he draweth the sword of the lord against adulteries, murders, rapes, robberies...spiritual whoredom, perverting of the right ways of the Lord.”⁴² Lay preaching, which the Presbyterians wrongly equated with Independency, presented a particular danger. “But in the loose way of Independency, any weak self-conceited illiterate person may undertake the most learned man that is, when and as often as he pleaseth.” According to Thomas Lamb, this led naturally to “popular government,” or democracy, which was “not only unscriptural but Antiscriptural, and most horribly absurd.” Answering charges that the democratic organization of Independent churches restored the purity of the primitive church, Lamb responded that “the church is out of this period, and perfecting itself after Reformation.” Sound doctrine could never issue from the whims and passions of the multitude.⁴³

The historical record, however, clearly refutes this Presbyterian analysis of Independency. First, as William Lamont points out, arguments from Independent clerics such as Henry Burton and the New Englander John Cotton stressed both rigid church

⁴⁰ Lamb, *Fresh Suit*, 6.

⁴¹ Quoted in Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 156.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴³ Lamb, *Fresh Suit*, 96.

discipline and anti-sectarian thought. They were not arguing for religious toleration.⁴⁴ If we take the political views of prominent Independents such as Oliver Cromwell and Phillip Nye into view, the Presbyterian arguments against Independency's natural proclivity for democratic politics were also wrong, as the next chapter will reveal. Their aspersions concerning the moral license of Independency need hardly detain us. The Presbyterian arguments regarding Independency as a fountain of sectarian radicalism were wrong as well. As we have seen through the example of Coleman Street, sects existed in England long before the "Independent" faction formed during the Westminster Debates. Sects did not spring forth from this source. Additionally, Presbyterian charges that atheism ran rampant among the Independents were transparently absurd. Ultimately, Presbyterians invented "Independency" as a way to publicly scourge saints who opposed their views on church organization and discipline. The tracts of Edwards and his allies tell us less about "Independents" and more about how Presbyterians envisioned the post-Civil War church and state: an established, hierarchical church which rigidly enforced Calvinist orthodoxy in a state operating under some revised form of the ancient constitution that preserved the social and political order but checked royal prerogatives. But in their attempt to preserve the monarchy, Presbyterians portrayed Independents as suspect partners in the war. Independents allegedly "undertake the Holy War against their Princes... telling them that (they were) commanded of God to destroy all wicked princes, and substitute new ones." With the end of kings, the Independents' real goal

⁴⁴ William Lamont, "Pamphleteering in the English Revolution," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 183-187.

became clear, for “goods to be in common.”⁴⁵ We will see later in the chapter how exaggerated this fear was.

The Presbyterian crusade would take on trans-Atlantic dimensions, an aspect of the church settlement debates rarely explored with any depth by scholars in the British academy. This is a costly oversight, for New England’s troubled religious history provided Presbyterians with a ready-made case study for a propaganda campaign against their enemies in Parliament and the army. The English could learn full well from the recent American past that Independency undermined godly order wherever it spread.⁴⁶ Reflecting on the small number of Independents, John Ball warned that “a little sparkle kindles great fires;” as it had in New England, Independency could produce a “combustion in the commonwealth” of Old England. Ball wrote that American Independents would prove factious in Old England, for its proponents refused to consider any other model of reform outside of the New England Way. “These differences betwixt the loving brethren of Old England and New had not been made this notorious, if some who cry up the Church way in New England, as the only way of God, had not been so forward, to blow them abroad in the world.”⁴⁷ Presbyterians charged that this inflexible insistence upon the Congregational model opened up divisions between the godly, and that the “self-interest” of the Independents had overcome the “peace and tranquility” of the church, putting the entire project of godly reform at risk.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Dugdale, *A Short View*, 5.

⁴⁶ See the following two chapters from Philip Gura and David Lovejoy for penetrating studies of New England’s radical image in the eyes of English Presbyterians: Gura, “New England’s Image at Home and Abroad,” *Sion’s Glory*, 215-236; Lovejoy, “New England Enthusiasts and the English Civil War,” *Religious Enthusiasm*, 87-110. Much of the following section on the conservative reaction in Old England against New England Puritanism owes to the research and conceptualizations of these two historians.

⁴⁷ John Ball, *A Tryall of the New-Church Way in New England and in Old*. (London, 1644), A4.

⁴⁸ James Noyes, *The Temple Measured or A Brief Survey of the Temple Mystical which is the Instituted Church of Christ* (London, 1647), A2.

The Hutchinson affair and Samuel Gorton's antinomianism gave English heresiographers another excellent opportunity to sway potential allies against Independents, although New England's divines protested that their church ways emerged from hard-fought victories over sectarian "heresies." The "New England way," they believed, defined itself against the kind of radical dissent that their English brethren feared. "Heresy," as we have seen, did flower in the American environment, but its seeds were first planted in the soil of Old and not New England. American dissent was not the natural issue of the godly church in the "wilderness," which drew the line firmly against religious toleration. In America, dissent instead represented the efforts of radical saints to recast New England in their own image when the victor in the contest to define the Reformation in the New World still remained unclear.

During the Westminster Assembly, Presbyterians purposefully obscured the complexity of the American experience, arguing that the perversities of Independency would invert "godly" conceptions of gender and power. Thomas Edwards, Robert Baillie, and Samuel Rutherford were especially adept at this technique.⁴⁹ These heresiographers conflated Shepard and Cotton's theology with the separatism of Williams and the antinomianism of the Hutchinsonians. All were boiled-down in a cauldron of American-made heresy that, if upset by an Independent English church settlement, would prove lethal to any hope of the nation's reformation. Samuel

⁴⁹ Robert Baillie, *Anabaptism, The True Fountain of Independency* (London, 1647); *A Spiritual Dissuasive Against the Errors of the Time* (London, 1648); Samuel Rutherford, *A Survey of the Spiritual AntiChrist* (London, 1648) The following works also pursue this line: *Tom Tell-Troth, or Works of Darkness Brought to Light* (London, 1647); Daniel Cawdry, *Vindiciae Clavium, or A Vindication of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven into the Hands of the Right Owners. Being some Animadversions Upon a Tract of Mr. J.C. called "The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." Also Upon another Tract of his called "The Way of the Churches in New England"* (London, 1645). The "J.C." that Cawdry refers to is John Cotton, minister to the First Church of Boston.

Rutherford called Anne Hutchinson the “American Jezebel,” for she was “vaine and self-conceited” and “would not stick to lye.” Her alleged dissembling on the personal “union with Christ,” which Rutherford regarded as a natural consequence of lay preaching, “drew to her way many godly people.” Rutherford styled New England a “democracy,” which inevitably bred heresy by uprooting hierarchy. The results were clear for the cleric, who predicted that New England “shall ever be infested with heresies, as now they are this day with new bee hives of Anabaptists, seekers, familists and antinomians.”⁵⁰

Daniel Cawdry condemned New England Congregationalism for empowering women like Hutchinson, who produced turmoil in families, sectarian fragmentation in the church, and antichristian teaching in the commonwealth. If women were allowed “any exercise of the power of the Keys, you may hear them gingle at the women’s girdles, which is an extreme beyond the Brownists, even downright Anabaptistical.”⁵¹ Gorton’s heresies were simply horrific, teaching that “Christ is not one single man who was crucified ...every saint is Christ.”⁵² This seemed to imply that no historical Christ ever existed. Christ was merely a manifestation of holiness and piety in the believer, which undercut the very fundamentals of most Christian belief. England should learn from American experience, to suppress the opportunities Independency allegedly gave to women in particular and heretics in general to tempt the godly into false religion. Heeding this warning, the nation, in the midst of a civil war, might avoid a bloody jacquerie of American-inspired heretics that would culminate in atheism and the rule of women.

⁵⁰ Rutherford, *Spiritual Survey of the Antichrist*, 176-177.

⁵¹ Cawdry, *Vindicaie Clavium*, 9.

⁵² Rutherford, *Spiritual Survey of the Antichrist*, 186.

As the tradition of heresiography dictated, Presbyterians trotted out the well-worn example of John of Leyden's sixteenth-century anabaptist rebellion. The Munster parallel reduced New England puritans to lusty, anabaptist perverts who under the guise of spiritual enthusiasm taught that "they might lawfully have their six or seven wives apiece."⁵³ Anabaptism, Presbyterians alleged, flourished in New England because Independency corrupted church doctrines; its proselytes took "faire opportunities to feed their eyes full of adultery in beholding young women naked, and in handling young women naked."⁵⁴ As they had at Leyden, sectarian heresies in New England "infected the inferior sort of people by means of conventicles," which Presbyterians construed as a New England norm and not the bane of the Massachusetts General Court.⁵⁵

Samuel Rutherford singled out Samuel Gorton for confusing libertinism and sedition with spiritual integrity. This "smelled rankly of the abominable doctrine of Muncer," but also of Dutch anabaptists David Georgius and Henry Nicholas, both of whom had made their way from Germany to England earlier in the century.⁵⁶ Robert Baillie also decried Congregationalism's alleged anarchic tendencies and condemned Gorton for teaching that the "saints are not to submit to the powers of the world or worldly powers, and that the powers and governments of the world have nothing to do with them for civil misdemeanours." By claiming that "there is no church, no sacraments, no pastors, no church officers, or ordinances in the world," Gorton seemed to deny the legitimacy of any form of institutionalized authority.⁵⁷ Thomas Underhill demonized the sectarian critique of magisterial and clerical power, and linked it to the

⁵³ Dugdale, *A Short View*, 5-10.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 120.

⁵⁵ Coffey, *The Mind of Samuel Rutherford*, 135.

⁵⁶ Rutherford, *Spiritual Survey of the Antichrist*, 166-175, 183-184.

⁵⁷ Baillie, *A Spiritual Dissuasive*, 150.

rise of Independent churches in Old and New England, proclaiming that “Hell” itself “broke loose” through the diabolical influence of Independency.⁵⁸

Although three American ministers turned down a 1642 invitation to attend the Westminster Assembly, they rose to the occasion to defend their orthodox credentials against Presbyterian charges of heresy, lending support to sympathetic clerics in Old England who looked to the New England way as a model of church reform.⁵⁹ In their *Apologetical Narration* (1644), all prominent English Independents, sought to encourage cooperation rather than division between Presbyterians and Independents, and rejecting arguments for toleration, used their mutual antipathy toward the sects to provide a common ground for cooperation and compromise.⁶⁰ To bolster Independency’s chances in this way, New England divines wrote several tracts that defended Independency on theological grounds.⁶¹ Far from a haven of blasphemy and sectarian fragmentation, they upheld New England, and hence Independency, as a fortress of reformed dogma and church organization. Published at the height of the Assembly’s deliberations, John Cotton’s three lengthy tracts attacked the links Presbyterians made between Congregationalism, Cotton’s teachings on free grace, and antinomian heresy.⁶² He enlisted other New England divines in this pamphlet war, most notably Thomas Hooker

⁵⁸ Thomas Underhill, *Hell Broke Loose* (London, 1660)

⁵⁹ The ministers receiving invitations were John Cotton, Thomas Hooker, and John Davenport. Hooker turned down the offer with the quip that it would be foolish to travel three thousand miles to agree with only three men, a comment indicative of the relative weakness of Independency at the outset of the English Civil War.

⁶⁰ Robert Paul, ed., *An Apologetical Narration* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1963); Lamont, “Pamphleteering in the English Revolution,” in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 184-185; Woodhouse, “Introduction,” in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 35.

⁶¹ Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 215-234.

⁶² The three works were entitled, *A Key to the Kindgom of Heaven* (London, 1644), *The Way of the New England Churches* (London, 1644), and *The Way of the Congregational Churches Cleared* (1648). Also see Emerson, *John Cotton*, 35-63, for an analysis of Cotton’s religious and political thought in these tracts.

and Richard Mather, who discussed the primitive Christian foundations of the New England Way in hair-splitting, theological detail.⁶³ The former Coleman Street minister John Davenport also lent his considerable influence to the effort, publishing a tract that further reinforced the orthodox fundamentals of free grace theology.⁶⁴

After returning to London during the Westminster Assembly, other Americans defended New England churches by describing the harsh treatment they meted out to colonial “heretics.” They thus turned the most effective weapons of their Presbyterian detractors against them. Thomas Weld, the former pastor of the Bay Colony church at Roxbury, formed part of this contingent. Returning to London in 1642, Weld published a widely-read book that explained how New England’s churches admitted members, elected ministers, arrived at proper doctrine, established church covenants, and perhaps most importantly, censured erroneous doctrines and ex-communicated dissenters. Employing a term used by his counterpart Thomas Edwards, Weld explained how Congregational churches in America “cut off the gangrened member that the whole body be not infected by it.”⁶⁵ A skilled writer, Weld managed to be simultaneously defensive and arrogant when defending New England’s church way.

Now let all godly minded judge, what error or iniquity is in our practice, so much cried out upon by the sons of men, and some of our dear brethren, who cry us down for Separatists, Schismatics, Anabaptists, and what not? The foundations are cast down, and what hath the righteous done? Oh, let men show us from the

⁶³ Thomas Hooker, *Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, (London, 1648); Richard Mather, *Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed* (London, 1643). For work on Hooker’s role in this debate, see Stock, “Thomas Hooker’s Journey through English Congregationalism to the New England Way,” 55-76; Bush, *The Writings of Thomas Hooker*, 96-128. Most Protestants, in varying degrees, saw the restoration of the primitive church as fruit borne of true reformation.

⁶⁴ John Davenport, *An Answer of the Elders of Several Churches in New England unto Nine Positions Sent over to Them* (London, 1643); *The Covenant of God’s Free Grace Most Sweetly Unfolded* (London, 1645); Isabel MacBeath Calder, *Letters of John Davenport, Puritan Divine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), 6-9.

⁶⁵ Thomas Weld, *A Brief Narration of the Practices of the Churches in New England*. (London, 1645), A2-13.

blessed word of truth, where our error lies, let them set down a purer pattern before us.⁶⁶

Weld, as we have seen, edited and published Governor John Winthrop's account of the Hutchinson affair, which distanced both the Bay Colony government and its churches from the notorious teachings of New England's most infamous prophetess.⁶⁷ In the preface, Weld and Winthrop correctly established that New England's antinomians came to America already infected with their "damnable doctrines." After surviving persecution in England, and a stormy journey to Massachusetts, God

sent a new storm after us, which proved the sorest trial that ever befell us since we left our native soil...which was this, that some going thither from hence full fraught with many unsound and loose opinions, after a time, began to open their packs, and freely vent their ware to any that would be their customers.⁶⁸

After providing a litany of Hutchinson's errors, the authors moved on to a history of how Hutchinson gained influence in the Bay Colony, first among the women then among the officers of the church, and then among some of the colonial government's most influential men. An account of her examination, trial, and banishment followed. To conclude, Weld and Winthrop took pains to show that the Congregational church had overcome its heretical tribulations.

Here is to be seen in the presence of God in his Ordinances, when they are faithfully attended according to his holy will...such was the presence and blessing of God in his own ordinance, that this subtlety of Satan was discovered...and that the Church which by her means was brought under much infamy, and near to dissolution, was hereby sweetly repaired...⁶⁹

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, A2-A3.

⁶⁷ Winthrop, "Short Story," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 199-310; Also see James Mosely, *John Winthrop's World: History as a Story: The Story as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 93, 123-126.

⁶⁸ Winthrop, "Short Story," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 201.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 310.

With the help of providence, the godly men of the New England churches portrayed the establishment of Independency as a determined effort to destroy corruptions that were rooted in English soil, and not in American Independency.

In *The Simple Cobbler of Agawam*, Weld's American colleague in London, Nathaniel Ward, sought to allay the fears of Presbyterian detractors by revealing how the godly's unique New World experiences strengthened rather than weakened reformation by bringing heresy out into the open for its ultimate destruction. A graduate of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, who fled to Holland after running afoul of Archbishop Laud, Ward eventually landed a living as the minister of the church at Ipswich in Massachusetts.⁷⁰ A "change of air discovers corrupt bodies," Ward wrote in his description of the New England churches, where the "reformation of religion" advanced to the peril of "unsound minds" and doctrines.⁷¹ Roger Williams and Samuel Gorton would have agreed with this, although their opinion of who possessed the "unsound minds" and doctrines would have turned the tables on Ward. But Ward wanted to make the point that the Bay Colony, rather than serving as a "nursery of schismatics," could provide a model for Presbyterians in Old England to deal with their own sectarian difficulties. In *A Simple Cobbler*, Ward turned the subversive message of mechanic preaching on its head, adopting the folksy voice of a pioneer cobbler whose rustic wisdom clarified how repelling both papists and heretics would open the door to true reform. If bishops obstructed godly religion then the church's "Fiddle will be out of tune," which might cause "some of the strings" of the state to "crack." On the other hand, he quipped, "poly-piety is the greatest impiety in the world." Liberty of

⁷⁰ Ward, *The Simple Cobbler*, x. Also see Giles Workman, *Private Men No Pulpit Men, or a Modest Examination of Lay-men's Preaching...in Answer to John Knowls* (London, 1646).

⁷¹ Ward, *The Simple Cobbler*, 6.

conscience, he continued, was “freedom from sin and error,” not the “liberty of error” that trapped antinomians in a “prison of conscience.”⁷²

In constructing his narrative, Ward ingeniously disengaged from the potentially unsettling prospect of a tradesman preaching to university trained divines. “Rather than meddle where I have so little skill,” Ward wrote that he would “sit by and tell my fears to them that have the patience to hear them, and leave the red hot question to them that dare handle it.”⁷³ Far from a radical voice of low rank howling in the American “wilderness,” Ward presented the views of New Englanders in decidedly deferential terms.

For church work, I am neither Presbyterian, nor plebsbyterian, but an Interdependent: My task is to sit and study how shapeable the Independent way will be to the body of England...and how suitable the Presbyterian way, as we hear it propounded, will be to the mind of Christ.⁷⁴

This put him on firmer ground to answer New England’s Presbyterian critics.

First, such as have given or taken any unfriendly reports of us New English, should do well to recollect themselves. We have been reputed a colluvies of wild Opinionists, swarmed into a remote wilderness to find elbow-room for our phanatic Doctrines and practices: I trust our diligence past, and constant sedulity against such persons and courses, will plead better things for us.⁷⁵

The cobbler then issued an edict proclaiming New England’s unequivocal stance against sectarian religion.

I dare take upon me, to be the Herald of New England so far, as to proclaim to the world, in the name of our colony, that all familists, antinomians, Anabaptists and other enthusiasts shall have free liberty to keep away from us, and as will come to be gone as fast as they can, the sooner the better.⁷⁶

⁷² Ibid., 10.

⁷³ Ibid., 35.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 36.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 6.

Ward tried to strike a humorous tone designed to set New England's critics at ease, although his call for genocide against the Irish in 1647, particularly his "curse" on those "that maketh not" their "swords starke drunk with Irish blood," was less charming.⁷⁷ Equally repulsive were Weld and Winthrop's glosses on the "monstrous births" of Anne Hutchinson and her friend and fellow-traveler Mary Dyer, filled as they were with gross exaggerations and gory, gratuitous detail concerning the physical deformities of their miscarried children. Winthrop would go on in 1649 to gloat over Anne's murder by Mohegan Indians on Manhattan Island.⁷⁸ Later in the Civil War, during the Putney Debates, Ward would re-title *The Simpler Cobbler* as *The Danger of Tolerating Levellers in a Civil State*, opening a new, trans-Atlantic stage of Bay Colony opposition to democracy that began in Rhode Island. The Independent clerics argued for rigorous church discipline; they did not endorse religious or political "freedom," as William Lamont correctly argued. But this is not to say, as Lamont does, that the religious debates among the godly during the Westminster Assembly did not produce an extensive, influential literature dedicated to innovative ideas concerning religious and political liberty. Again, a trans-Atlantic perspective is necessary to assess this history.⁷⁹

While New England provided the disputes over Congregationalism with its fair share of heresiographers, it also supplied radicals who connected congregational autonomy to religious toleration, regarding both as reciprocal instruments of true

⁷⁷ Ibid., 63.

⁷⁸ Winthrop, "Short Story," in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 214-217; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 87-88.

⁷⁹ Lamont, "Pamphleteering in the English Revolution," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 187. Lamont calls discussions of religious "freedom" during the 1644-1646 period "overblown." For this view, also consult C.H. George, "Puritanism as History and Historiography," *Past and Present* 41 (1968), 97-102.

reformation. In London, these men joined with a group of saints led by Coleman Street's John Goodwin to promote the idea that the struggle against the King amounted to a struggle to safeguard liberty of conscience. Coleman Street itself would provide a refuge for a network of returned New Englanders of this stripe, including Roger Williams and Samuel Gorton, who along with the powerful Henry Vane, emerged as leaders in the cause for liberty of conscience. As the decade wore on, Americans in London were exposed through friendships with Goodwin to a wider circle of radicals who would go on to become leaders of the Leveller movement, a group of soldiers and civilians who like the Rhode Island exiles considered religious freedom and political democracy to be the pillars of a godly commonwealth.

The influence of former New Englanders and the intellectual energy on Coleman Street combined to make 1644 a propitious year for religious toleration. Vane's power owed in part to his meteoric ascent in Parliament following Pym's death in 1644. "What Cromwell was to the army," a contemporary said, "Vane was to parliament." Both men by this time had acquired significant positions of leadership within the godly camp and had used their growing power to champion liberty of conscience against their foes in Parliament and the Westminster Assembly.⁸⁰

By sponsoring the Root and Branch bill, negotiating an alliance with the Scots, and facing down Holles' peace party, Vane had already emerged as a gifted statesman; in 1644 he would supply the Independents in Parliament with political leverage against

⁸⁰ Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 63; Roger Howell, "Cromwell and English Liberty," in R.C. Richardson and G.M. Ridden, eds. *Freedom and the English Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 25-44; Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat: Milton and Some Contemporaries* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 184-190.

Presbyterian MPs.⁸¹ The Presbyterians in the Assembly had also been strengthened by the Scottish alliance, and played this to their advantage against the Independents. However, after Cromwell's victory at Marston Moor in 1644, the political momentum swung in favor of the Independents. This gave Vane the opportunity to press for a church settlement that embraced congregational autonomy, although he differed with Independents over the issue of whether the state held the rightful power to police doctrine within the churches.⁸²

In September 1644, Vane and Cromwell co-sponsored the "Accommodation Order" which gave Independent churches full legal sanction. In fact, Vane and Cromwell had developed a close friendship during the war, going so far as to call each other by nicknames, Vane answering to "Brother Herron" and Cromwell to "Brother Fountain."⁸³ Replying within the Assembly to the chorus of Presbyterian opposition to the Accommodation Order, Vane argued that the English church should be remodeled along neither Presbyterian nor Independent lines; the state should have no role at all in a true national church, which he defined as a community of believers left to pursue the truth according to reason. This was the law of God, as well as the natural right of every Englishman living under the protection of the common law. But to Vane, the Accommodation Order served only as a half-measure. He told the assembled delegates at Westminster to expect more if the war ended in a Parliamentary victory. In October, Vane struck a blow for lay preaching by defeating a measure that prohibited all but

⁸¹ Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 183-203. Vane's skillful alliance with the Scots, known to posterity as the Solemn League and Covenant, came at a time when Royalist victory seemed almost certain.

⁸² Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 222-224; Firth, "Henry Vane," *DNB*, 119-120.

⁸³ Firth, "Henry Vane," *DNB*, 120; Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 225.

ordained ministers from preaching in public.⁸⁴ At about this time, Vane's friend John Milton published *Areopagitica*, perhaps the most famous tract ever written on behalf of a free press, an institution that both Vane and Milton valued in principle and as a practical weapon to counter the effects of Presbyterian propaganda.

Vane enjoyed the support of an old friend from New England in his fight for toleration, Roger Williams. Vane now wielded the kind of power in England that could afford Rhode Island unprecedented support in its showdown with Massachusetts. During the height of the Westminster Assembly debates, Vane helped Williams secure a charter for Rhode Island that guaranteed its territorial integrity as well as religious freedom for its citizens. As a template for what he wanted to accomplish in England, Vane provided Williams with a commonwealth patent that forbade the civil power to interfere in the religious lives of the people.⁸⁵ Caught up in the fervor of the Westminster Assembly, Williams dashed off a quick sermon that he delivered in support of wide-ranging tolerance. While formulating his systematic thinking on religious toleration, he kept close company with John Milton and John Goodwin, who published his own influential tract on toleration, *Theomachia*, in 1644.⁸⁶ Williams argued in his sermon that a national church empowered to impose its doctrines and practices upon the entirety of the people would naturally lead to persecution. Even if successful in establishing uniform practice, he argued, it would create a nation of hypocrites, a situation that in the end would destroy godly religion and impede, perhaps terminally, the progress of the Reformation. He also

⁸⁴ Firth, "Henry Vane," *DNB*, 119-120; Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 195-196; Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 220-225.

⁸⁵ Spurgin, *Roger Williams*, 95-97; Garrett, *Roger Williams*, 151-160; Firth, "Henry Vane," *D.N.B.*, 120; Miller, *Roger Williams*, 101-102.

⁸⁶ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 192; Ziff, *Puritanism in America*, 111.

answered New Englanders who defended the suppression of American sectarianism.⁸⁷

In his famous pamphlet, *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution*, Williams blasted John Cotton while laying out one of the period's most articulate and intellectually coherent apologies for religious tolerance.⁸⁸ Williams wrote that "God requireth not an uniformity of religion to be enacted and enforced in any civil state. Enforced uniformity," he maintained, "is the greatest occasion of civil war, ravishing of consciences, and destruction of millions of souls."⁸⁹ By setting up a national church, Williams argued, the Westminster Assembly would only sow the seeds for future civil wars.

His own experiences in the Bay Colony, which he outlined in *The Bloody Tenet*, offered explicit proof for his theory. In Massachusetts, a court composed of saints who fled persecution in England had become persecutors in their own right. He reflected as well on other American experiences in *The Bloody Tenet*, particularly with Native Americans, and commended their religious freedom and democratic forms of civil government.⁹⁰ Though Williams did not regard Indians as part of a "true church," he contended in *The Bloody Tenet* that they should be allowed to worship freely. Imposing a "true church" would produce false and antichristian converts. "The wildest Indians in America," Williams wrote, had "civil and earthly governments as lawful and true as any government in the world." Indians should therefore remain unmolested by overzealous missionaries and magistrates from colonial territories. Christ working on their

⁸⁷ Garrett, *Roger Williams*, 150-160; Miller, *Roger Williams*, 77-79.

⁸⁸ Miller, *Roger Williams*, 86-89; Morgan, *Roger Williams*, 93-97.

⁸⁹ Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution* (London, 1644) in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 266.

⁹⁰ Williams, *Bloody Tenet*, in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 267.

consciences, he hoped, and not the sword of forced conversion, would bring their salvation.

Williams went on in *The Bloody Tenet* to address the implications religious tolerance held for commonwealth government. Reiterating that magistrates could not enforce religious doctrine without becoming tyrants, Williams went on to argue that God usually built his true church from the bottom up. Citing I Corinthians 1.26 and James 2.5, Williams showed how God “generally” used “the poor and mean” to preserve his true ordinances. “This is clear not only in reason, but in the experience of all commonwealths where the people are not deprived of their natural freedom by the power of tyrants.” Williams was a Calvinist. He did not see all religions as equal paths to the truth, but he did see elements of the truth in Native American practice, just as he saw its perversion in the hands of the godly when they usurped the civil rights of others in the false pursuit of reformation. He therefore did not see civil or religious liberty as a privilege of the Elect, the powerful, or propertied.⁹¹ Commonwealth government, as a carnal institution, preserved the natural, not spiritual world. He could therefore construe the liberties it afforded as natural rights in “what nation soever, in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America...”⁹² Williams wrote *The Bloody Tenet* as a direct attack against the policies of the Bay Colony court and clerisy. Moreover, his American experiences illustrated how reformation projects could go awry, and supplied him with insights into the types of

⁹¹ Andrew R. Murphy, *Conscience and Community: Revisiting Religious Toleration in England and America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

⁹² Williams, *Bloody Tenet*, Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 282, 283.

civil and religious “tyranny” that he believed his brethren in England were susceptible to and should therefore scrupulously avoid as they debated in the Westminster Assembly.⁹³

By 1644, Vane’s friendship with Cromwell and his growing influence in Parliament helped make the vision Williams outlined in *The Bloody Tenet* a political principle, one that came to define the war effort for tens of thousands of those who were doing the fighting. They accomplished this largely through the political muscle that Vane flexed in Parliament to push through the passage of the Self-Denying Ordinance. This legislation furthered the interests of toleration by weeding-out inept, religiously suspect, and less-than-zealous army officers. The purge elevated Vane’s fellow-traveller in the cause of liberty of conscience, Oliver Cromwell, to a position of commanding military and political influence in the “New Model” army.⁹⁴

Williams and Vane were not the only New Englanders making news in London at this time. When the heresiographers Edwards and Baillie wrote of Coleman Street as a breeding ground for the teachings of Samuel Gorton, they misrepresented his beliefs, but not his presence in the ward. This was not a slippery attempt to smear Gorton by placing him in a hornet’s nest of heresy –the Rhode Islander found his own way there. Gorton returned to the city in 1646 and sought fellowship within the ward’s conventicles, particularly Thomas Lamb’s General Baptist congregation, which embraced the notion of the indwelling Holy Spirit and universal salvation. While preaching in Lamb’s church, Gorton made a particularly distinct mark on London’s sectarian world. He left New

⁹³ James Ernst, "Roger Williams and the English Revolution," *Rhode Island Historical Society Collections* 24 (1931), 2.

⁹⁴ Derek Hirst, *England in Conflict, 1603-1660, Kingdom, Community Commonwealth* (London: Arnold, 1999), 222; Morrill, *Nature of the English Revolution*, 340.

England, like Williams, to seek Parliament's protection from the encroaching power of the Bay Colony, and again like Williams, he did his best to publicize the persecutory policies of leading American elites like Shepard, Winthrop, Cotton, and Endicott. To be sure, other New Englanders such as Hanserd Knollys, who also kept a church on Coleman Street, contributed to the onslaught against religious persecution, but Gorton attracted the most attention, both of the favorable and disapproving sort.⁹⁵

Heresiographers might have exaggerated the size of the crowds that Gorton attracted on Coleman Street, but they correctly concluded that the American's preaching had a subversive effect on the young apprentices, artisans, unskilled laborers, and those from the "middling sort" who attended the conventicle. Those who approved of the message they heard would have found Gorton's words of spiritual, civil, and social egalitarianism a welcome blast against Presbyterian designs to maintain a propertied monopoly of religious and political power.⁹⁶ Sharing the pulpit with some of London's most famous sectarians, Gorton reveled in the spiritual fervor and godly enthusiasm that he found on Coleman Street. Whether his colleagues there included, as alleged, the notorious prophetess, "Sister Stag," is difficult to verify.⁹⁷ But what is clear, however, is that Gorton would not have been troubled to share a pulpit with a woman, for he had followed Anne Hutchinson to Rhode Island and sided with her during the Coddington controversy. Like Samuel How's conventicle, or John Clarke's Newport congregation, Lamb's Church welcomed all those in attendance to claim the power to preach if the

⁹⁵ Hanserd Knollys, *A Moderate Answer unto Dr. Bastwick's Book* (London, 1645); Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 285-288.

⁹⁶ Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 285-288

⁹⁷ Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 150.

Spirit so moved them, uniting the leveling force of radical spiritism with democratic deliberation in the congregation.⁹⁸ Any member could prophecy. Any member could also challenge those who presumed to preach in a gospel spirit. Avoiding attempts to arrive at rigid, uniform doctrine, these meetings strove to discern from the experience and wisdom of the gathered congregation what new light could be shed on the current state of the godly cause in England. Gorton's experiences on Coleman Street proved to be a watershed in the development of his own political convictions, at a time when he engaged in serious reflection about his past battles with persecution in New England.

The fruit of this reflection was one of the seventeenth century's best-known works on liberty of conscience and antinomian spirituality, *Simplicities Defense Against Seven Headed Church Government* (1646). New England's harsh treatment of religious dissent never looked worse, particularly in the eyes of those who mattered most, namely the factions in Parliament and the army led by Vane and Cromwell sympathetic to toleration. Presbyterians became so anxious about the tract, and radical New Englanders in general, that they brought Gorton and Hanserd Knollys before a Parliamentary council on charges of blasphemy. Members of Vane's party secured their acquittal, and gave Gorton a license to preach in London. He also received the welcome patronage of Lord Warwick, who guaranteed him safe passage through Massachusetts when he chose to return to New England.⁹⁹

In this light, the conclusion may be drawn that Gorton's arguments concerning the Bay Colony's severity towards heterodoxy were both popular and persuasive. He compared Winthrop to Herod, the colony's "God man," who "to satisfy his own lusts, in

⁹⁸ Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 96-99; R.L. Greaves, "Thomas Lamb," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 2: 164-166.

⁹⁹ Gorton, *Simplicities Defense*, 40. Gura, *Sion's Glory*, 285-288; Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 137.

his lordship over it... pursues with all eagerness to make himself a god, by reigning over the bodies and estates of men.”¹⁰⁰ Gorton called the obedience demanded by Massachusetts magistrates and ministers the “tabernacle of moloch,” the Old Testament idol who could be appeased only by human sacrifice. He criticized the colony’s violent treatment of dissenters and Native Americans, claiming in contrast that in his colony, “we profess right unto all men, and not to do any violence at all, as you do in yours.”¹⁰¹

Gorton supplemented this critique of his American enemies with the language of the common law, and used it to legitimize the practice of religious toleration as a common right of all freeborn subjects of the King. The Bay Colony violated the liberties that the common law tradition provided for those who lived under its jurisdiction. The freeborn liberties of Englishmen, “the laws of our native country,” should reign in America as well as England. But by turning its back on the rule of law, Massachusetts had engaged in the “robbing and spoiling of our goods” and “the livelihood of our wives and children,” a phrase that echoed the argument in Question Eight, Observation Two of *A Political Catechism*.¹⁰² Both *Simplicities Defense* and *A Political Catechism* defined tyranny as government conducted in violation of the rule of law, which made it both a civil offense and a sin against God. Humans, “that species or kind that God hath honored with his own image...” could not be made “slaves” to one another since God had not “made man to be a vassal to his own species or kind.”¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Gorton, *Simplicities Defense*, 38.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 42; Vane would also dismiss the concept of natural, human hierarchy in *A Retired Man’s Meditation* (London, 1654).

All saints connected Christian concepts of equity with commonwealth principles of justice, but for Gorton, Christ lived and ruled as a leveling monarch within the body of the people; dying for all men, he commissioned his divine right of salvation not to set up inequalities of power and distinction among the people, but to lay them low. Thus, Gorton defined “the people” as the common creation of God, not as a corporate body determined through temporal distinctions based on material wealth or spiritual election. Williams came to the same conclusion, although through Calvinist convictions that separated natural rights in a civil society from the privileges of the elect in their respective churches. Both Gorton and Williams advanced concepts of citizenship that invested political agency in the masses in ways that the common law tradition did not, and the implications were revolutionary. But for Gorton, the spirit of God, not nature, devolved legitimate power upon the people to resist or overturn rulers who violated either the common or the higher law. The common law protected the people’s civil liberties, but the Holy Spirit, in Gorton’s view, authorized the people to combine and change the law. Gorton’s right of the “spirit” provided a religious origin for political agency, while Williams found his way there through the laws of nature. During the debates consuming the Westminster Assembly, Coleman Street radicalism and New England experience combined through Gorton and Williams’ work to produce a political vision of toleration intended to cultivate the civic virtue of the commonwealth’s citizens, who would exercise their spiritual gifts and natural rights in the service of the public good.¹⁰⁴

John Milton recognized the value of such a political vision, and condemned heresiographers for misrepresenting sectarian radicals as anarchists and seditious. He

¹⁰⁴ For another example, see John Goodwin, *Hagiomatrix* (London, 1647).

construed the work of Edwards, Baillie, and others as onslaughts against the accumulation of knowledge, “Under these fanastic terrors of sect and schism, we wrong the earnest and zealous that thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirred up.”¹⁰⁵ This novel embrace of innovation, this thirst for the unfolding truth tried in the crucible of experience and reflection, the “trying of all things” as Milton wrote, would help radicals transform the English Civil War into the English Revolution.¹⁰⁶

Gorton’s advocacy of the common law as a bulwark against tyranny, his egalitarian concept of citizenship, as well his associations with London sectarianism linked him directly to the leaders of the emerging Leveller movement, who attended Thomas Lamb’s Coleman Street congregation at precisely the same time that Gorton preached there.¹⁰⁷ From this circumstantial evidence, it is quite likely that Gorton, while laboring over *Simplicities Defense*, took part in discussions with the men who would come to lead the Levellers, and that his reflections on his experiences in New England might have influenced their unequivocal demand that England’s new godly commonwealth establish toleration as a fundamental liberty. Painful lessons from New England, drawn from both Gorton and Williams’ tracts, perhaps strengthened the Levellers’ resolve in this regard. Timing is crucial here; during this period, the Levellers had commenced a campaign to organize disaffected sectarians and soldiers who feared that a Presbyterian-styled settlement would reduce the commons of England to the “slavery” that they had endured under the Stuart Dynasty. In much the same way that the Bay Colony had banished its own radicals to define its church and government, those who had fought hardest for

¹⁰⁵ Milton, *Areopagitica*, 31-32.

¹⁰⁶ See Scott, *England’s Troubles*, 233-236 for a discussion of how the term “radical” can be usefully construed as those who embraced fundamental change during the English Civil War.

¹⁰⁷ Pauline Gregg, *Freeborn John: A Biography of John Lilburne* (London: Harap, 1961), 116, 124, 155-157, 228, 251.

liberty of conscience in England were likely to be deprived of it as the nation reinvented itself after the war.

The organization of the Leveller movement within Coleman Street Ward combined pre-war adversaries like John Goodwin with the old members of Samuel How's Bell Alley conventicle, now ministered to by Thomas Lamb and Samuel Gorton. Into this circle moved some of the most pivotal figures of the English Revolution, including John Lilburne, William Walwyn, Richard Overton, and Nicholas Tew, all of whom lived and worshipped within the ward.¹⁰⁸ Roger Williams, who became Goodwin's constant companion, also entered the network, which gathered in a variety of places, including Lamb's church, Goodwin's house on Coleman Street, and the many taverns dotting the neighborhood, including *The Nag's Head* (made famous by Samuel How), *The Windmill*, *The Star*, *The Mouth*, and *The Whalebone* near the Royal Exchange.¹⁰⁹ "Very good friends we were all," wrote Walwyn, reflecting on this exciting period of ideological ferment and political organization.¹¹⁰ These years witnessed a remarkable, if not prolific flurry of radical publications, petitions, and party organization that would climax at the famous Putney Debates and the Ware Mutiny in October-November 1647.¹¹¹ Coleman Street Ward's central place in this epoch of radical politicization has not been emphasized in the secondary literature, which is curious in light of the historic events that occurred there.

¹⁰⁸ Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 151-152; Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 395; L. Mulligan, "William Walwyn," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 3: 286; Gregg, *Freeborn John*, 116, 144-146.

¹⁰⁹ Norah Carlin, "Leveller Organization in London," *The Historical Journal* 27 (1984), 959-960.

¹¹⁰ William Walwyn, *Walwyn's Just Defense* (London, 1649), n.p.

¹¹¹ Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints*, 146-161.

Goodwin, Walwyn, Overton, Lilburne, and Williams held meetings on Coleman Street in 1644 to systematize their thinking on liberty of conscience and to devolve the best political strategies and arguments to secure it in England and America.¹¹² Out of these meetings came a network of political leadership, as well as groundbreaking works that would define the cause of liberty of conscience and the democratic goals of the Leveller movement. American experience would inform this project in important ways. We have already explored Roger Williams' classic statement on the subject, *The Bloody Tenet*, a work that he conceptualized during the period of these discussions. Williams' work, and his simultaneous effort to secure a charter guaranteeing toleration in Rhode Island helped inspire Goodwin and Walwyn, who collaborated on the book usually attributed to Walwyn entitled, *The Compassionate Samaritan*. In this work, they set out as Williams had before, to define religious tolerance as the foundation of a godly commonwealth. Liberty of conscience made possible the complete civil equality of all men, "therefore," wrote the authors, "no man ought to be punished for his own judgment." "To beget this judgment in the people and Parliament, that 'tis the principle interest of the commonwealth that authority should have equal respect...that all men may be encouraged to be alike serviceable" to the commonwealth.¹¹³ By securing the liberty for citizens to express themselves freely without fear of magisterial reprisal, liberty of conscience would cultivate a spirit of civic involvement and service among the people, who would not leave such matters as they traditionally had to their social betters. Liberty of conscience declared the individual's independence from a culture of deference and paternalism, but bound the individual to the collective good since each person had an

¹¹² Walwyn, *Just Defense*, n.p.

¹¹³ William Walwyn, *The Compassionate Samaritan* (London, 1644) in David Wooton, ed., *Divine Right and Democracy, An Anthology of Political Writing in Stuart England* (London: Penguin, 1988), 248-249.

equal right and godly obligation to protect and preserve justice and equity in the commonwealth. Through this work, which embodied the principles of justice established in the Rhode Island commonwealth, Goodwin and Walwyn established what the Levellers would come to see as the cause and purpose of the English Civil War, the struggle to secure liberty of conscience as the foundation of all common rights.

In trying to define their novel political project, the Levellers pursued innovation while legitimizing it through tradition. Following on Walwyn's and Goodwin's efforts, John Lilburne's *England's Birthright Justified* (1645) championed the free press and drew on the history of the common law and ancient constitution to prove that all Englishmen were entitled to secure their civil and religious liberties against unjust usurpations, whether by king, bishop, magistrate, or divine. The real rebels, Lilburne concluded, were not the mechanick preachers, sectarians, or New Model soldiers, but the King's Party, whose "Norman Yoke" had subverted but not conquered the common rights inherent in England's freeborn traditions.¹¹⁴ Walwyn, contrary to the views of most Leveller historians, also used this version of English history in his pamphlets, and cited his studies of the common law to bolster his arguments. "I have taken this my just and necessary liberty for having read, observed, debated and considered both ancient and latter times the variations and changes of governments, and looking on the present with an impartial judgment, I still find a necessity for my accustomed watchfulness."¹¹⁵

Walwyn read Sir Edward Coke's *Institutes of the Common Law*, and profited from it. He portrayed the Magna Charta as an instrument of English liberty, and, citing Coke's

¹¹⁴ R.B. Seaberg, "The Norman Conquest and the Common Law: The Levellers and the Argument from Continuity," *Historical Journal* 24 (1981), 791-806; Greenberg, *Radical Face of the Ancient Constitution*, 226-227; Burgess, *Politics of the Ancient Constitution*, 226-227.

¹¹⁵ William Walwyn, *England's Lamentable Slavery* (London, 1645), in Barbara Taft and William McMichael, eds., *The Writings of William Walwyn* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 146.

studies of the 25th of Edward III , contended that “our Ancestors...avoided extreme laws...not to be stained with bloody statutes.”¹¹⁶

Although he used common law history in his own arguments, Walwyn himself grew suspicious of relying upon it as a foundation for civil liberty, and with other Levellers he resorted to the natural law theories of Hugo Grotius and Robert Bellarmine.¹¹⁷ After praising Lilburne’s *England’s Birthright Justified* in his next book, Walwyn emphasized natural over common law rights, proclaiming, “that liberty and privilege...is as due to you as the very air you breathe.”¹¹⁸ Beyond the English common law, Walwyn looked toward “the common law of equity and justice” as the foundation of soul and civil liberty.¹¹⁹ Without natural rights, Walwyn cautioned, citizens could be reduced to slavery by unscrupulous rulers who, invoking custom and precedent, would reserve civil rights to a select body of propertied men. If the King or the Presbyterians triumphed in the war, Walwyn believed that they would use the tradition of the common law to exclude a large body of people from the commonwealth that they had fought to protect.

In 1645, at about the same time that Walwyn articulated these views, Goodwin had begun to adopt the tenets of universal salvation, which his detractors conflated with Laud’s “Arminian” doctrine.¹²⁰ This alienated several powerful saints in the parish of St. Stephens, notably Isaac Pennington. Supported by the subterfuge of Thomas Edwards

¹¹⁶ Walwyn, *Walwyn’s Just Defense*, 386.

¹¹⁷ Scott, *England’s Troubles*, 284-289; Glenn Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 161-164.

¹¹⁸ Walwyn, *Just Defense*., n.p.

¹¹⁹ Taft and McMichael, eds., *The Writings of William Walwyn*, 20; J. Colin Davis, “The Levellers and Christianity,” in Gaunt, ed., *The English Civil War: The Essential Readings*, 286.

¹²⁰ For a sampling of Goodwin’s views on universal salvation, see his *Pagans’ Debt and Dowry* (London, 1651). A typical Calvinist critique may be found in George Kendall, *Theokratia, A Vindication of the Doctrine Commonly Received in the Reformed Churches* (London, 1653).

and William Prynne in the Westminster Assembly, Pennington succeeded in depriving Goodwin of his pastoral duties in Coleman Street.¹²¹ Goodwin responded with his own pamphlet, *A Calumny of Mr. Prynne*, a tract that decried the Presbyterian party as the English heirs of the Inquisition. Richard Overton, who also subscribed to universal salvation, supported Goodwin in this effort by publishing two books in 1645, *The Arraignment of Mr. Persecution* and *Martin's Echo*.¹²²

Besides defending Goodwin against Prynne and Edwards, Overton's brilliantly satirical pamphlet took up a controversial argument that the Levellers would again pursue in 1649, that Irish Catholics were justified in rebelling in 1641 since they were the victims of a foreign king's policy of religious persecution.¹²³ This natural rights position, along with others in works published by the Coleman Street press, prompted dozens of heresiographical replies. These works ranged from Edwards' famous *Gangreana* to the New Englander Edward Winslow's *Hypocrisie Unmasked*, which contained a furious refutation of Samuel Gorton's *Simplicities Defense*. Winslow labored to link Gorton to notorious familists of the past and misconstrued his alliance with the Narragansett Indians as a combination formed expressly to overthrow the Bay Colony in a violent war of conquest. In addition to raising the gruesome specter of a bloodthirsty union of savages and schismatics, Winslow carefully justified the war of extermination waged against the Pequot Indians, whom he argued were poised to murder white men in their beds. The liquidation of the Pequots, Winslow maintained, spread the worldwide

¹²¹ Spalding, "John Goodwin," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 2: 16-17; Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 111-116.

¹²² Lamont, "Pamphleteering in the English Revolution," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 190.

¹²³ Richard Overton, *The Arraignment of Mr. Persecution* (London, 1645), 27.

progress of reformation in much the same way that the conquest of Ireland would.¹²⁴

Through *Gangreana* and *Hypocrisie Unmasked* a common though overlooked trait in heresiography becomes clear: the demonization of radicals who questioned the godliness of wars of conquests waged against “savages,” whether in Ireland or America.

The attempt by Presbyterian MPs to suppress Coleman Street Ward’s radical press sparked a massive petitioning campaign by the Levellers that originated among the ward’s sects during the 1646-1647 period.¹²⁵ Nicholas Tew operated an illegal press from his home on Coleman Street, which he employed in 1644 to churn out works by his friends Lilburne, Overton, and Goodwin. Tew worked in conjunction with another printer, Henry Overton, a relation of Richard; Tew and both of the Overtons were members of Thomas Lamb’s church on Bell Alley.¹²⁶ Apprehended in early 1645 for his “seditious and blasphemous” publications, Parliament dispatched Tew to the Fleet Prison for refusing to divulge the authors of the subversive manuscripts.¹²⁷

A confusing combination of anxiety and exhilaration subsumed the Coleman Street sectarians during this period, when increasing persecution mixed with the rising fortunes of the New Model Army. The years 1645-1646 witnessed Tew’s arrest and the imprisonment of Lilburne, Overton, and Walwyn, as well as a decisive Roundhead victory at Naseby and the King’s surrender to the Scots in May 1646. The post-war church and state settlement loomed nearer and nearer as its shape became increasingly uncertain. These conditions helped the charismatic John Lilburne, an old hero in the cause of toleration, emerge as the popular voice of the Leveller movement. And it was at

¹²⁴ Winslow, *Hypocrisie Unmasked*, 71-92.

¹²⁵ See Taft and McMichael’s “Introduction” to *The Writings of William Walwyn* for an able summary of the Leveller movement from 1645-1649.

¹²⁶ Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 322; Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 151.

¹²⁷ Gregg, *Freeborn John*, 116.

this time, through a series of public meetings at Lamb's church and *The Windmill* tavern on Lothbury Street, that the Leveller movement began to take shape as an organized political force.

"Behold how great combustions and tumults have kindled among the Ignorant Vulgar," wrote William Prynne, who blamed the Levellers, and specifically Lilburne for lighting "a public dangerous flame" among "diverse" of his "seditious faction" who in "sundry private conventicles...sat brewing mischief."¹²⁸ John Bastwick painted an equally derogatory, if not more vivid picture of the "crowds and multitudes" that attended these Leveller gatherings.

If ever you had seen the picture of Hell...in York-House, where all the postures of the damned creatures, with their grisly looks...what ghastly, ugly sour faces of...anguish they made, and had been amongst the company (accompanying Lilburne), and had seen what grisly looks they made...to the Presbyterian party...and had withall heard their confused hideous noises, calling for the liberties of the subjects, and for benefit of Magna Charta and the petition of Right, and for a public hearing, you would have thought yourself in the very suburbs of hell.¹²⁹

The fact that Englishmen appealing to Magna Charta and the Petition of Right were rendered as ghoulish demons speaks to the paranoia of the Presbyterian faction, who saw a threat against property in any attempt to organize those outside the traditional "political nation." What appeared to heresiographers as hell must have seemed like a new age of democratic liberty to the tradesman and small producers who flocked to *The Windmill Tavern* to debate the principles of political justice that they hoped would provide the foundation for the post-war state settlement.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 124.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 125.

In the spring of 1647, at the *Windmill Tavern*, the Levellers met with leaders from various sects and representatives elected by the army rank-and-file.¹³⁰ Lilburne had organized a large petition that called for religious toleration while condemning censorship, excessive taxes, and monopolies. Parliament reacted by commissioning Colonel Leigh to investigate.¹³¹ When Leigh intercepted the petition in Thomas Lamb's congregation on Bell Alley, Parliament summoned Lamb to give evidence against the as yet unknown authors, although Walwyn, Overton, and Lilburne were not unsurprisingly fingered as prime suspects. A large crowd led by Nicholas Tew converged at Westminster to pressure the MPs to allow the petition. In front of Westminster, soldiers arrested Tew for proclaiming, "If we cannot be allowed to petition we must take some other course," which could only have meant open rebellion.¹³² The Levellers next presented multiple petitions for Tew's release as well as Lilburne's, who had since been arrested and imprisoned. The petition battle, however, represented a much larger struggle than just the fight against Tew's or Lilburne's imprisonment. It showed with extreme clarity that the "Ignorant Vulgar" of London would claim, through natural right and direct action, an equal place in the post-war state, something most MPs found seditious as well as terrifying.¹³³

This crisis precipitated stronger links between the sectarian Levellers and their allies in the New Model Army during the summer and autumn of 1647. In organizing petition campaigns, mass meetings of London sectarians, and an alliance with radical

¹³⁰ McMichael and Taft, eds., *The Writings of William Walwyn*, 20-25; Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 399-400; Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 147-150; Joseph Frank, *The Levellers, A History of the Writings of Three Seventeenth-Century Social Democrats: John Lilburne, Richard Overton, William Walwyn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 55.

¹³¹ William Walwyn, *Gold Tried in the Fire, or the Burnt Petitions Revived* (London, 1647), Preface.

¹³² Gregg, *Freeborn John*, 116; Walwyn, *Just Defense*, n.p.

¹³³ Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 151-154.

officers and the rank-and-file of the New Model Army, the Levellers gave clear expression to the popular demand for a more extensive overturning of the ancien regime, one that Parliamentarians first feared when howling mobs surrounded Westminster in 1642.¹³⁴ Organizing this popular enthusiasm, the Leveller campaign called for the abolition of the House of Lords and demanded an end to all forms of hereditary rule. They also sought changes in the electoral process, reform with respect to legal procedures, and a re-organization of the court system. They additionally supported the constitutional enumeration of civil liberties such as the free exercise of religion and a disestablished church with an end to tithes, an uncensored press, the right of citizens to assemble and petition the government for the redress of grievances, annual parliaments, and a universal male franchise. Payments of arrears to the New Model Army also figured prominently in their demands. John Wildman and William Walwyn went so far as to recommend that the mainstay of confiscated Royalists lands should not be awarded to MPs and army grandees as war booty; instead, Royalist land should be redistributed to the army rank-and-file and the landless poor according to the “common law of equity.”¹³⁵

By the summer of 1647, the Levellers had mobilized disaffected sections in the army by sponsoring the election of fifteen “agitators,” officers chosen by their commands to represent soldiers’ grievances to the officers’ council and Parliament.¹³⁶ The sources of discontent among the soldiery included arrears in pay, impressment for a projected conquest of Ireland, and the fear that Parliament and the New Model leadership might

¹³⁴ Scott, *England’s Troubles*, 269-277.

¹³⁵ Frank, *The Levellers*, 77-135; D.M. Wolfe, ed., *The Leveller Manifestoes of the Puritan Revolution* (New York, 1967), 1-109; David Wootton, “Leveller Democracy and the Puritan Revolution,” in J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie, eds., *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹³⁶ Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, introduction, 18, 21-23.

strike a peace with the King at the expense of the “common freedom” purchased by the blood of slain comrades. To coordinate the political alliance between sectarian Londoners and army radicals, Coleman Street Ward denizens such as Edward Barber and Edmund Chillenden made frequent trips from London to supply the army with political intelligence concerning the machinations of Presbyterian MPs.¹³⁷ In a series of general rendezvous, the New Model Army in conjunction with civilian Levellers issued several “engagements,” most notably at Triploe Heath, that called for the abolition of the monarchy and declared the New Model to be no “mere mercenary army hired to serve any arbitrary power of a state.” The army engagement at Triploe Heath established a pointed, radical alternative to Parliament’s plan to invade Ireland to supplant army arrears of pay with an allotment of Irish land for participating soldiers.¹³⁸ The soldiers were also aware that Parliament saw the invasion as a way to rid England of an armed, politically astute, but disaffected body of men.

By declaring against mercenary principles, the New Model established itself as an instrument of liberty that, acting in accordance with the common law of equity, held the common good, defined in egalitarian terms, as its chief and most precious object. Lieutenant-Colonel John Jubbes, an officer sympathetic to the Levellers made it clear in a tract dedicated to Ireton that the army should not be used to exact revenge against Irish Catholics, to “bring ruin and undo them and their posterities.” Rather, the Irish should be given full toleration in the practice of their religion. In opposing the Irish invasion, the Levellers in the New Model Army refused to be transformed into what they construed as

¹³⁷ Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 155-162;

¹³⁸ Morrill, “The Army Revolt of 1647, Appendix 2,” *Nature of the English Revolution*, 331; Austin Woolrych, “The Debates from the Perspective of the Army,” in Michael Mendle, ed., *The Putney Debates of 1647: The Army, the Levellers and the English State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 55.

paid hirelings of a counter-revolutionary government. A war remained to be fought at home against a Parliament that refused to grant common right to the very men who had defended its privileges against the depredations of that “man of blood,” Charles Stuart.¹³⁹

Looking at this history, Mark Kishlansky, a historian of the New Model Army, was moved to write that “we now agree” that the politics of the army “was largely reactive in nature,” and did not enter the war with a “pre-formed ideology.” Besides this astonishing presumption of historiographical consensus, Kishlansky wrongly concludes that the New Model was essentially a conservative body, one that merely responded to events. As we have seen, their concerted struggle with civilian Levellers took the initiative to pursue liberty of conscience and a litany of other, radical political grievances that helped shape the critical events of 1647. The political principles they professed were not a pre-formed ideology, although this is not to say that the soldiers were previously apolitical. Their convictions in 1647 were the product of beliefs and experiences that, over time and space, took form in arenas that could range from Coleman Street conventicles to English battlefields.¹⁴⁰

The famous Putney Debates of October-November 1647 marked a turning point in this process of politicization.¹⁴¹ At the debates, Colonel Thomas Rainborough argued the most passionately and the most persuasively for the Levellers and their allies in the

¹³⁹ Ian Gentles, “The Agreements of the People and their Historical Context,” in Mendle, ed., *The Putney Debates*, 147-156; Patricia Crawford, “Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood,” in Gaunt, ed., *English Civil War: The Essential Readings*, 303-323; Carlin, “Cromwellian Reconquest of Ireland,” in Bradshaw, Hadfield, and Maley, eds., *Representing Ireland*, 210-214; Aylmer, *Levellers and the English Revolution*, 41; John Jubbes, *Several Proposals for Peace and Freedom by an Agreement of the People* (London, 1648) in Wolfe, ed., *Leveller Manifestos*, 318.

¹⁴⁰ Mark Kishlansky, “What Must Be,” in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 84. Kishlansky bases the proof of his views on his superior “empiricism,” which he claims is lacking in Marxist historiography. See Holstun, *Ehud’s Dagger*, 192-256 for a thoroughly empirical reply to this view.

¹⁴¹ Michael Mendle has edited a new collection of essays that address the context, republican ideology, and historiography of the Putney Debates (cited above, footnote 122).

army. But ironically, it was Rainborough's adversary, Cromwell's son-in-law, Henry Ireton, whose language most reflected the radical political potential of liberty of conscience. Ireton's eventual position in the debate, however, showed the limitations of this potential as the army high command used the exchange at Putney to define the rightful and exclusive place property power would hold in the new commonwealth.

According to Ireton, the justice of the war and the legitimacy of the soldiers' demands rested "in our judgements and consciences...professing to act to those ends that we have thought to be answerable and suitable to the mind of God."¹⁴² God had revealed, in the hearts and minds of the soldiers, the justice of taking-up arms against the King; providence would guide their consciences again in defining the re-birth of freedom in the post-war state. Ireton continued,

Whatever I find the work of God tending to, I should desire quietly to submit to. If God saw it good to destroy, not only King and Lords, but all distinctions of degrees –nay, go further to destroy all property, that there's no such thing left, that there be nothing at all of civil constitution left in the Kingdom –if I see the hand of God in it I hope I shall...not resist it.¹⁴³

Ireton drew this dramatic example for the edification of his audience, striking a pose of solidarity between the agitators and officers' council that testified to their common belief that the Lord had made them instruments in a cause whose ultimate aims became known through unfolding revelation. But in using property as a forensic device, Ireton was playing with fire. As countless historians have pointed out, he defined civil liberty and popular sovereignty at Putney "with an eye to property;" in determining "what laws we shall be ruled by," "no person has a right to this that hath not a fixed permanent interest in this kingdom." This, according to Ireton, was "the fundamental part of the civil

¹⁴² "The Putney Debates," in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 49.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 50.

constitution.”¹⁴⁴ Kishlansky writes that agitators and the officers’ council both desired unity. It is hardly surprising that this “consensus,” as Kishlansky calls it, existed among men who fought together for five years. What was novel, and what Kishlansky underplays in his work, is how decidedly different views concerning the privileges of the propertied came into contention at Putney, straining unity to the point of mutiny.¹⁴⁵

Moreover, Kishlansky constructs “consensus” in the army along hierarchical lines, ones many in the rank-and-file disregarded when their perceived birthright rested in the balance. Indeed, at Putney, Thomas Rainborough’s echoes of Samuel How’s old spiritist refrain that “God is no respecter of persons” shattered whatever illusions the officers’ council still entertained regarding the strength of traditional notions of social and political order within the ranks. For many private soldiers in the New Model, order and unity for the preservation of property, if called upon to deny common right, could not withstand the truth of the spirit, nor the fundamental equity that Rainborough defined as the essence of England’s political tradition. He declared that “the poorest he in England” was entitled, as a customary and natural right, to the same degree of political participation as the commonwealth’s “men of property,” chiefly because all government derived from “the people.”¹⁴⁶ Henry Ireton agreed with this in part, but he defined “the people” as the corporate body of the kingdom’s property holders. But from Rainborough’s view, propertied and un-propertied men each had an “equal stake” in a free state, since each had fought for common rights, most fundamentally, their liberty of conscience.¹⁴⁷ Nothing in the law of God, in Rainborough’s view, could justify denying these rights to any

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 54-55.

¹⁴⁵ Kishlansky, “What Must Be,” in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 89.

¹⁴⁶ “The Putney Debates,” Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 53.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 52.

Englishmen. If appeals to the ancient constitution would not suffice in determining the post-war political settlement, Rainborough asked the assembly to choose between “the law of God and the law of man” in determining whether to “prohibit the meanest man in the kingdom” from enjoying its full protection.¹⁴⁸ Thus, Rainborough exposed the inherent contradiction of Ireton’s and the officers’ council’s position. Ireton had argued that providence ultimately determined the justice of their cause. Ireton had also argued that property formed the foundation of the civil constitution. But the civil constitution’s emphasis on property rights, as Rainborough argued, could be used to deny many men their God-given civil liberties. If the post-war settlement ultimately crossed the law of God, it would, according to Rainborough, jeopardize the providential favor that had brought the army victory. Ireton had said as much, and Rainborough shrewdly turned Ireton’s own argument against him. If there was consensus at Putney, it was the belief that God would withdraw his providential protection from the army if their chosen course of action crossed his law. At Putney, “the spirit of Christ” guiding the radical conscience had become the substance of common freedom; in iconoclastic fashion this spirit would shatter what the radicals saw as the false idol that men had made of property. Consequently, in a just commonwealth, the letter of the common law could not contradict “the true law of equity.” At Putney, the radicals made clear that the new republic would be born not only through civil war, but also through a conflict among the victors as to whether providence had ordained a revolution that would overthrow the traditional place of property in commonwealth principles.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 56.

The debates at Putney produced the definitive statement of the Leveller movement, the *Agreement of the People*, which abolished “rule by a single person” and established that sovereign political power in the commonwealth originated and remained in the hands of the imprecisely defined “people.”¹⁴⁹ The document called for biennial parliaments, the abolition of the House of Lords, a new system to reapportion parliamentary representation, guaranteed the franchise to Parliament’s male supporters, and safeguarded religious liberty from the power of civil authorities. The *Agreement* next forbade, as another form of “bondage,” the impressment of soldiers. This criticism of impressment drew upon the egalitarian spirit of common right. “That as the laws ought to be equal, so they must be good...These things we declare to be our native rights,” so the *Agreement* maintained. Soldiers, like any citizen in the commonwealth, could not be coerced into obeying an arbitrary act of government that destroyed their own liberty.¹⁵⁰ During the anxious days surrounding the Putney Debates, John Goodwin would echo these positions in the pamphlets that he wrote in support of the Levellers.¹⁵¹ Responding to the *Agreement*, General Ireton dealt the Levellers a set back, severely curtailing some of the more radical passages that called for manhood suffrage, the abolition of rank in the legal process, and the prohibition of impressment, fearing that these measures would undermine private property and jeopardize the security of the nation against its foreign and domestic enemies.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Gentles, “Agreements of the People,” in Mendle, ed., *Putney Debates*, 149-151.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 150; Scott, *England’s Troubles*, 281-283; *An Agreement of the People*, in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 443-445.

¹⁵¹ Spalding, “John Goodwin,” in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 2: 17; Maurice Goldsmith, “Levelling by Sword, Spade and Word: Radical Egalitarianism in the English Revolution,” in Colin Jones, Malyn Newitt, and Stephen Roberts, eds., *Politics and People in Revolutionary England: Essays in Honour of Ivan Roots* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 65-80.

¹⁵² John Wildman, *Putney Projects* (London, 1647); Holstun, *Ehud’s Dagger*, 246. Austin Woolrych believes that the grandees ordered William Clarke, who kept the running record of the debate, to strike the

On November 11, 1647, shortly after the conclusion of the Putney Debates, Charles escaped from Hampton Court, precipitating the Second Civil War. Before moving against the King, however, Cromwell would have to settle the disaffection growing in his own army. Seizing the moment to press their advantage, the Levellers, in a meeting at *The Windmill Tavern*, urged Londoners to turn out *en masse* at Ware, in Herefordshire, where Cromwell had agreed to meet a general rendezvous of the army to discuss the soldiers' grievances. Drawn up in review formation at Corkbrush Field, the soldiers of the New Model wore Leveller slogans in their hats, proclaiming "England's Freedom" and "Soldiers Rights." Among the most vocal and passionate soldiers that afternoon was Cornet Wentworth Day, Venner and Aspinwall's old friend from the Boston militia. Day marched back-and-forth among his comrades in General Thomas Harrison's regiment and exhorted them to stand firm against the pleas for unity offered by General Thomas Fairfax.¹⁵³ General Fairfax begged the men to remember their place and to reunite as comrades; Rainborough responded by offering him a copy of the *Agreement of the People*. Arriving on the field to witness this scene, Cromwell rose to a furious rage at the insolence of his soldiers and personally tore the papered slogans from their uniforms. He ordered the arrest of three soldiers and had them draw lots to execute one at random. Private Arnold, who drew the unfortunate lot, was then shot by his two comrades. An early advocate of liberty of conscience, Cromwell now sought to constrain its political corollary, democracy. Representing the emerging post-war state at

vote expanding the franchise to beggars and servants from the official transcript. See his *Soldiers and Statesmen: The General Council of the Army and its Debates, 1647-1648* (Oxford, 1987), 243-244, 257n.

¹⁵³ Frank, *The Levellers*, 283; Gentles, "Agreements of the People," in Mendle, ed., *Putney Debates*, 155.

Corkbrush field, Cromwell had attempted to break the back of a radical political challenge through the instrument of capital punishment.¹⁵⁴

The following year, Cromwell's party, the Levellers, and Presbyterian moderates in Parliament would stage a three-way contest to define the shape of the emerging state; many of its decisive turning-points took place on Coleman Street. In response to the political egalitarianism of the first *Agreement of the People*, Long Parliament Presbyterians waged a counter-revolution by seeking a constitutional settlement maintaining the monarchy, prompting Cromwell and his supporters in the Army to hatch a plan to forcibly remove conciliatory MPs to pave the way for regicide.¹⁵⁵ It was later alleged that these fateful decisions that were to alter the course of British history were made in *The Star Tavern* on Coleman Street. There, the Coleman Street MP Mark Hildesly and the former New Englander Hugh Peter, now the New Model Army's most famous chaplain, made persuasive cases for the King's execution.¹⁵⁶ In November 1648, the army leadership and the Levellers clashed over this plan in a long, contentious meeting at *The Nag's Head* on Coleman Street.¹⁵⁷

The Levellers remained skeptical of regicide for many reasons, not the least of which was that the officers' council had made no assurances that the new government would

¹⁵⁴ Holstun, *Ehud's Dagger*, 246-252.

¹⁵⁵ David Underdown, *Pride's Purge: Politics in the English Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Rogers, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 97, 102-03.

¹⁵⁶ The servant Wybert Gutner was asked to recall what he remembered about the fateful meeting. Gutner testified, "My Lord, I was a servant at The Star, in Coleman Street, with one Mr. Hildesley, that house was a house where Oliver Cromwell and several of that party did meet in consultation. They had several meetings. I do remember very well one among the rest in particular, that was Master Peters was there, he came in in the afternoon about 4 o'clock, and was there until 10 or 11 at night. I being but a drawer could not hear much of the discourse, they were writing, but what I know not, but I guessed it to be something drawn up against the King. I perceived that Mr. Peters was privy to it and pleasant in the Company." Freshfield, *History of the Parish of Coleman Street*, 15-16.

¹⁵⁷ Frank, *The Levellers*, 172; Gregg, *Freeborn John*, 251. The meeting date of 15 November was not without symbolic significance, as it marked the first anniversary of the Leveller Mutiny at Corkbush Field in Herefordshire.

honor liberty of conscience.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, the Levellers John Lilburne, John Wildman, and William Walwyn questioned the lawfulness of regicide. It was an act of tyranny, they argued, to plant the state in the blood of an illegally executed sovereign. A godly commonwealth could not be founded on a criminal act committed by an arbitrary power. This argument to save the King's life showed the selflessness of men like Lilburne who had been whipped by order of Royal courts, and who knew full well that the King had wished for his execution during the war. Lilburne put the rule of law above both political expediency and personal revenge, fearing that the purge of Parliament to set up Charles' execution might reduce England to a military dictatorship. In response, the Leveller leadership resolved to strike a second agreement with the army to enumerate inalienable constitutional liberties. Reflecting on the army's modification of the *First Agreement*, Lilburne remarked

The Army had cozened us the last year and fallen from all their promises and declarations, and therefore could not rationally be anymore trusted by us...that (in preserving the Parliament) we might have something to rest upon and not suffer the army to devolve all the government of the kingdom into their wills and swords (which were two things we, nor no rational man could like) and leave no person nor power to be a counter-balance against them. And if we should do this, our slavery for the future might probably be greater than ever it was in the King's time.¹⁵⁹

Unfortunately for the radicals, Cromwell's party would win the day, and through Pride's Purge in December 1648, Presbyterians suspected of sympathy for the King were removed from Parliament. This cleared the way for the regicide court that convened in

¹⁵⁸ Andrew Sharp, "The Levellers and the Execution of Charles I," in Jason Peacey, ed., *The Regicides and the Execution of Charles I* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 191.

¹⁵⁹ John Lilburne, *Legal Fundamental Liberties* (London, 1649) in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 343.

St. Stephen's Hall, Westminster, and ultimately convicted Charles I for waging war against his people in violation of the laws of England.¹⁶⁰

Former New Englanders and Coleman Street radicals ended up on opposite sides of this debate. Hugh Peter, the former pastor of Salem, judge of Anne Hutchinson, New Model Army chaplain, and perhaps the saint most despised by the Cavaliers for his theatrical proselytizing, now served as one of Cromwell's closest confidants. John Goodwin lent his support to the execution with the tract, *Right and Might Well Met*.¹⁶¹ Milton published his famous *Eikonklastes* in defense of the execution using arguments drawn from natural law, the Bible, and St. Edward's laws.¹⁶²

What role did Henry Vane play in these pivotal events? He worked with Cromwell during the crucial days of October and November 1647, and Lilburne and Ireton held him responsible for the demise of the *Agreement of the People*. The London crowd also viewed his continuing negotiations with the King suspiciously, fearful that he would strike too generous a compromise.¹⁶³ In December 1648, however, Vane put a stop to these speculations by opposing any further overtures to the Royalists.¹⁶⁴ Whether Vane actually supported Pride's Purge is unclear, but he firmly opposed regicide. A recently purchased manuscript in the Bodleian Library that details a debate among Cromwell's advisors could provide further insight into Vane's position. The manuscript details an anonymous speaker's exasperation with the unlawfulness of the King's trial, a

¹⁶⁰ Howard Nenner, "The Trial of Charles I and the Failed Search for a Bounded Monarchy," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Restoration, Ideology, and Revolution*, 1-22; Nancy Klein Maguire, "The 'Tragedy' of Charles I: Distancing and Staging the Execution of a King," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Restoration, Ideology, and Revolution*, 45-66.

¹⁶¹ Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 216.

¹⁶² Janelle Greenberg, *Radical Face of the Ancient Constitution*, 230-236; Moss Tubb, "Printing the Regicide of Charles I," *History* 89 (2004), 500-524.

¹⁶³ Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 98-99.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 111.

view that Vane later described in more detail when on trial for his own life. Moreover, the providential language in the manuscript parallels that used by Vane. The speaker describes the proceedings as not only unlawful, but as a sin against God, whose providential care of their righteous cause had preserved it against tyranny. Executing the King, the speaker held, amounted to an arbitrary act motivated by a form of self-interest inconsistent with “the old cause, which if it be still as just as it was” would not require illicit bloodshed to preserve.

Have we no other way to account God, but by diminishing him in the value and effects of his Providence...Wherefore did we invoke him for patronage if now we want to provoke him by relapsing to a vassalage, and to those shackles which Royalty had impaired for us and our posterity? It were something if we had insulted in our victories, if we had looked more on our own carnal hands than on the dignity of this work.¹⁶⁵

This reflects the same style of expression, the same providential language, and the same critique of self-interest that Vane would use in two pamphlets of the 1650s, *The Retired Man's Meditations* (1655) and *A Healing Question* (1656). Over and above the question of authorship, the speaker's opposition to regicide, set alongside that of the Levellers' reveals an early fissure in the revolutionary party over the legitimacy of using military force as a lawful means to claim legitimate civil authority.¹⁶⁶

Despite the arguments against regicide, on January 30, 1649, a hooded executioner beheaded Charles I in front of the Banquet Hall at Whitehall Palace.¹⁶⁷

Opposed to Charles I since the days of personal rule, Coleman Street saints would play a

¹⁶⁵ Bodleian Library, Ms Eng C 6075 f.155/1. This manuscript does not explicitly mention Vane as the author of these statements, but based on its language, philosophy, and opposition to regicide, it can possibly be attributed to Vane. Many thanks to Michael Webb, an archivist of the Bodleian Library, for pointing out this document to me, and for lively discussions concerning the identity of the figure arguing against regicide. Mr. Webb believes that Thomas Fairfax may offer another possible candidate.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ C.V. Wedgwood, *A Coffin for King Charles* (London, 1964) for a detailed, chronological account of the King's trial and execution.

part in his execution. John Goodwin published another tract to gain support for the unpopular decision, and Owen Roe and Mark Hildesly signed the death warrant, something that would seal their own fate twelve years later with the restoration of Charles II. In advocating for the King's execution, Rowe had taken the lead among London Independents by organizing a regicide petition from the City's Common Council. Isaac Pennington, also a leader in this design, had the good sense to argue for the execution while not putting his name to the order, although as we will see at the Restoration, this subtle ploy did not work to Pennington's benefit.¹⁶⁸

In this chapter, we have seen how New England and New Englanders came to play pivotal parts in some of the most important debates and decisive moments of the English Civil War. The image and history of the godly experiment in New England proved more than malleable in the debate over England's post-war church settlement, particularly concerning the issue of religious toleration. For Presbyterians, the New England Way collapsed into a sectarian nightmare of blasphemy, sedition, and social subversion. For some English Independents, however, the congregational system devised by New Englanders provided the way forward for the reorganization of the English church. They were assisted in the Westminster Assembly by lengthy arguments written for the occasion by New England divines such as John Cotton, Thomas Hooker, and the former Coleman Street pastor, John Davenport. Returned New Englanders like Roger Williams and Samuel Gorton embraced Independent church organization, but addressed the repression of heterodoxy by the Bay Colony clerisy as another example of prelatical tyranny to be avoided at all costs. Other New Englanders like Henry Vane became leaders in the

¹⁶⁸ Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 187; R.L. Greaves, "Isaac Pennington," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 3: 21-22; R.K.G. Temple, "Owen Roe," *ibid.*, 3: 116-118.

House of Commons during these turbulent years. Vane's own experience with religious persecution led him to become a forceful advocate for religious toleration in Old and New England, for he authored the Accommodation Order and supplied Roger Williams with the necessary political leverage to gain a charter including religious toleration for Rhode Island. Vane also opposed regicide as an arbitrary legal proceeding, the same principle he invoked while defending John Wheelwright and the American antinomians.

The English Civil War also marked the second phase of the Atlantic history of godly reformation in Coleman Street Ward. Through the leadership of John Goodwin, the ward became an intellectual haven for the leading advocates of religious toleration in New and Old England. Goodwin's circle drew in New Englanders like Roger Williams, and London stalwarts such as John Lilburne, William Walwyn, and Richard Overton, some of the most impressive political thinkers of the period. But innovative religious ideas also developed in Coleman Street outside of this salon which intersected with the radical sectarian tradition present in the ward since the days of Samuel How. Samuel Gorton of Rhode Island became a minister in How's old church in Bell Alley during his three year sojourn in London. There he wrote one of the English Civil War's most famous tracts in defense of religious toleration, *Simplicities Defense*. In the third decade of its evolution as a forcing house of godly religious and political organization, Coleman Street played host to the rise of the Leveller movement, where Goodwin's circle of Lilburne, Walwyn, Williams, and Overton converged with Gorton and Lamb's in the conventicles of the ward's backstreets. The three Leveller leaders were members of Coleman Street churches during Gorton's visit, and there they began organizing the massive petitions that would become a hallmark of the movement. Coleman Street

sectarians, along with John Goodwin, supported the Levellers during the famous Putney Debates, and meetings to mobilize the Ware mutiny also occurred in the ward's conventicles and taverns. By looking closely at Coleman Street Ward during the Civil War, we have been able to explore a center for the organization of radical politics and the trans-Atlantic history of an idea, liberty of conscience. Moreover, the struggle for toleration helped transform a war between King and Parliament into what would become a republican revolution. The expanding application of this ideal was truly revolutionary, for in defining the New Model Army as an instrument of democratic liberty, radicals rejected its use as a mercenary force that might conscript them to rob others of their own soul and civil liberty. Henry Vane, one of Parliament's most vociferous supporters of religious toleration, did not make this connection between soul and civil liberty during the Civil War. We will see how Vane eventually made this transition during the Interregnum, when he would conclude that the means by which England conducted its imperial expansion contradicted the principles of commonwealth justice to which the revolution had given birth. This in turn will call for further exploration into the Atlantic history of the radical politics that the godly of England and America forged in their continuing struggle against inward and outward bondage.

CHAPTER FIVE

“THAT CRIMSON STREAM OF BLOOD”: THE ENGLISH EMPIRE IN IRELAND AND THE CARIBBEAN, 1649-1655

Oliver Cromwell's problems did not end with the execution of Charles I. A nation wounded by war stood in need of healing, as did Cromwell's party of godly revolutionaries, torn apart by their conflicting visions of the post-war settlement. But as Blair Worden has written, "If there was one thing which could be relied upon to unite the majority of Englishmen, it was the hatred of the Irish."¹ A war against this common enemy, as members of the Rump Parliament advised Cromwell, would subdue Catholic and Royalist armies in the field while uniting the nation around the new government.

Professor Worden rightly qualified his observation. Doubtlessly a majority of the English loathed Irish Catholics, not least due to the fear that the King might use Ireland and Irish Catholic soldiers to invade the British mainland. Notwithstanding, a well-organized, armed, and articulate minority in England dissented. In April 1649, the second projected invasion of Ireland sparked a second Leveller mutiny. The soldiers cited a litany of grievances, including arrears of pay, impressment for military service, restrictions on petitioning officers, and the rejection of mercenary principles. In opposing the invasion, the mutinous soldiers reclaimed the constitutional liberties outlined in the Leveller engagements at New Market, Triploe Heath, and Putney. Although a good number of mutineers vowed that they would fight if given their arrears, many others sided with a comrade who asked, "Will you go on still to kill, slay and murder men, to make them (the grandees) as absolute lords and masters over Ireland as you have made

¹ Blair Worden, *The Rump Parliament, 1648-1653* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 191.

them over England?”² Another author, a soldier who had joined the Levellers, foresaw the same carnage and concluded, “We have waded too far in that crimson stream already of innocent, Christian blood.”³ To quell the unrest, Cromwell moved decisively on April 27 and ordered the execution of Robert Lockyer, a New Model soldier of influence among the mutineers.⁴ Thousands of Londoners wearing the symbolic Leveller sea-green ribbon turned out for Lockyer’s funeral, one of early modern England’s greatest popular political spectacles.⁵ The invasion of Ireland would proceed, but not before the government tried to make violently clear that the days of army democracy were over.

This chapter explores the imperial evolution of the English Republic, a process that began in Ireland, moved quickly to Scotland, and from there through wars against Holland and Spain, would range as far as Africa and the Caribbean. Within this wide-ranging, trans-national context, the chapter poses several questions about the English Revolution’s Atlantic history. To what degree did a consensus exist among English republicans as to the wisdom, justice, and necessity of imperial expansion? Why did Cromwell move against Catholic Spain in the Caribbean and not in Europe? Who helped persuade Cromwell to undertake the expedition, known to us now as the Western Design? How did working people from across Britain and Ireland experience the military and naval mobilization necessary to launch the Design? How might pursuing a labor history of the Western Design complicate intellectual histories of seventeenth-century British imperialism? Finally, how did Cromwell’s republican opponents, many of them ex-New

² William Walwyn (?), *The English Soldier’s Standard* (London, 1649). Parentheses mine.

³ *The Soldier’s Demand* (London, 1649), n.p.

⁴ Holstun, *Ehud’s Dagger*, 254.

⁵ London witnessed another massive Leveller funeral procession a year before for Colonel Thomas Rainborough, who was killed by Royalists at Doncaster during the siege of Pontefract Castle.

Englanders living in London, reflect on the nature of the Good Old Cause in relation to these imperial projects?⁶

Although he would play a leading role in its execution, Oliver Cromwell was not the imperial architect of the Irish conquest. In March 1649, when members of the Rump asked several officers to persuade the general to take command of an expeditionary force, Cromwell replied, “I think there is more cause of danger from disunion amongst ourselves than by anything from our enemies.”⁷ Cromwell had due cause for alarm. First, the Levellers remained a persistent problem that spring, demanding that the Rump dissolve itself in favor of free Parliamentary elections and the ratification of an English constitution. Secondly, appeasing the Presbyterian faction proved increasingly difficult. Both Cromwell and the Rump realized that bringing them back into the political fold would widen the godly political base and enhance the regime’s national legitimacy. They also knew that Presbyterians were wary of the links between the Levellers, the army, and the sects. Thirdly, the Rump had passed burdensome assessments and excise taxes that weakened its already tenuous support in the country. To add to these woes, Charles II had turned from the Scots to Lord Ormonde and the Catholic Confederation in Ireland, conducting negotiations about a possible alliance that would reclaim the throne for the Stuarts.⁸

⁶ For work on the Western Design, see David Armitage, “The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Languages of Empire,” *The Historical Journal* 35 (1992), 531-555; *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 60-125; Blair Worden, “Providence and Politics in Cromwellian England,” *Past and Present* 109 (1985), 55-99; Robert Thomas Fallon, “Cromwell and the Western Design,” in Balachandra Rajan and Elizabeth Sauer, eds., *Milton and the Imperial Vision* (Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1999), 133-154.

⁷ W.C. Abbott, *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 2: 36-39; Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 190.

⁸ Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 165-169, 189-197. For the assessment and excise taxes, see C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait, eds., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum* (London, 1911), 2: 26, 213-235.

Over the course of the spring of 1649, the army leadership and the Rump came to the conclusion that they could consolidate their position only by crushing the Leveller challenge and appeasing their Presbyterian brethren. The remaining Irish problem would be resolved through outright conquest. Subsequently, the Rump passed a treason act against the Levellers, and made signals to Presbyterians about adopting their model of church organization. The Rump sweetened this with an overture to Presbyterian merchants in London concerning potential profits to be made through financing an Irish expedition.⁹

The conquest of Ireland, in the Rump's view, would eliminate a political threat while creating new financial opportunities for the revolutionary state and its financial backers. While initially a drain on the treasury, an Irish war could solve several of the government's financial problems.¹⁰ Confiscated Crown and Catholic land in Ireland could pay-off the arrears claimed by the New Model Army. They could also establish a new stream of revenue from London financiers and merchant "Adventurers," who would take Irish lands as security. Enclosing these lands would also generate more agricultural productivity and profitability, which of course would substantially increase the tax revenue that Ireland could generate to finance future wars with continental rivals.¹¹

⁹ S.R. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649-1656* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903), 1: 40; Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 192; Austin Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 304-305; John Prendergast, *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* (Dublin: Mellifont Press, 1922), 239-245.

¹⁰ Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London: Penguin Books, 1989), 101, 110.

¹¹ Willy Maley, "Milton and 'the complication of interests'" in Early Modern Ireland," in Rajan and Sauer, eds., *Milton and the Imperial Vision*, 162-164; K.S. Bottigheimer, *English Money and Irish Land: The Adventurers in the Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); Kevin McKenny, "The Seventeenth Century Land Settlement in Ireland: Towards a Statistical Interpretation" in Jane Ohlmeyer ed., *Ireland from Independence to Occupation, 1641-1660* (Cambridge, 1995), 181-200; T.C. Barnard, "Settling and Unsettling Ireland: The Cromwellian and Williamite Revolutions," in Ohlmeyer, ed., *Independence to Occupation*, 240-250; Nicholas Canny, *Kingdom and Colony: Ireland and the Atlantic World, 1560-1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 102-116; Sarah Barber,

These financial considerations for conquest were justified by the rhetoric of Protestant patriotism. Royalist sympathizers in Ireland threatened, as Cromwell proclaimed, to “overrun” England, an event that would “return” the nation “unto that tyranny that formerly we were under the yoke of.”¹²

The radicals, however, would not lie down. To six thousand of the ten thousand New Model Army troops slotted for service in the invasion, Irish conquest did not square with the ideals for which they had originally taken up arms, although many, if not most, harbored virulent views toward the Roman church.¹³ As we saw at the outset of the chapter, for many soldiers who considered themselves devoted servants to the public good, an invasion of Ireland could very well transform the republican army into an instrument of mercenary tyranny. Invariably, the young government discovered itself in the midst of a crisis, where a successful conquest of Ireland depended upon crushing dissent in the very body Parliament depended upon to defend the nation.

The arrears plan seemed deceitful at best to the New Model mutineers, who now saw their commander, Oliver Cromwell, metamorphosing into a vengeful tyrant.¹⁴ The Levellers played an instrumental part in organizing radical discontent in the army, although as Norah Carlin has argued, exaggerated “memories” of Protestant deaths during the Irish rebellion of 1641 probably limited the popular appeal of resistance.¹⁵

“‘Nothing But the First Chaos:’ Making Sense of Ireland,” *Seventeenth Century* 14 (1999), 24-39; Prendergast, *Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland*, 239-245.

¹² Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, 2: 38-39.

¹³ Chris Durston, “Let Ireland be Quiet:” Opposition in England to the Cromwellian Conquest of Ireland,” *History Workshop Journal* 21 (1986), 105-111; Norah Carlin, “The Levellers and the Conquest of Ireland in 1649,” *Historical Journal* 30 (1987), 273.

¹⁴ These engagements contracted between the “Agitators,” the elected representatives of the New Model rank and file, and the army’s high command, are reprinted in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 396-409.

¹⁵ Norah Carlin, “Conquest of Ireland in 1649,” 273. Also see Nicholas Canny, “What Really Happened in Ireland in 1641?” in Ohlmeyer, ed., *Ireland: From Independence to Occupation*, 24-42; Sarah Barber,

William Walwyn articulated radical discontent in *The English Soldier's Standard* (1649), as the soldiers themselves did in a pamphlet called *The Soldiers' Demand*, written the same year in Bristol. The newspaper *Moderate Intelligencer* published an anonymous series critical of the invasion called, "Certain Queries." It ran for six weeks and received wide-circulation among the encampments of the New Model, as well as the taverns and meetinghouses frequented on Coleman Street by their civilian supporters in the sects.¹⁶ One Leveller summed up the reasons for his opposition through natural rights theory, asking whether Englishmen were entitled to "deprive a people of the land God and nature has given them and impose laws without their consent."¹⁷ The anonymous author of *Liberty of Conscience Asserted* portrayed Catholics as "zealous in their way, and...verily persuaded in their conscience that they serve God aright."¹⁸ The pamphlet *Tyrannipocrit Discovered* (1649), often attributed to Walwyn, lamented that "contrary to the rule of Christ, rich and proud tyrants do rule the Christian world," and went on to call Cromwell a "dictator" after condemning the Irish conquest.¹⁹

Despite the financial crisis, domestic factionalism, and Royal threat that motivated the conquest, Cromwell justified the mission as one that avenged and liberated Irish Protestants and spread liberty of conscience in a land of popish tyranny. He thus employed the same commonwealth principles of justice to support the invasion that his radical critics had used to condemn it. In conquering Catholic Ireland, he would not

"Nothing But the First Chaos," 24-39. For an example of the anti-Catholic propaganda that shaped Protestant memory, see James Howell, *Mercurius Hibernicus: or an Inquiry into the Late Insurrection in Ireland* (London, 1642).

¹⁶ Carlin, "Levellers and the Conquest of Ireland," 271-272; "Cromwellian Reconquest of Ireland," 210-213.

¹⁷ Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 121.

¹⁸ *Liberty of Conscience Asserted* (London, 1649), 5; Carlin, "Cromwellian Reconquest of Ireland," 213.

¹⁹ *Tyrannipocrit Discovered with his Wiles, Wherewith He Vanquisheth* (Rotterdam, 1649).

“meddle with any man’s conscience” by imposing Protestantism on papists. Racist rhetoric also infused these justifications. The Irish had to be subdued due to their natural treachery and savagery, which helps explain the horrific carnage at Wexford and Drogheda, where Winslow’s exhortation to make English swords “stark drunk with Irish blood” was realized. The slaughter of civilians there was calculated by Cromwell to terrorize the Catholic population into submission. Reducing the Irish in this way entailed the defeat of papistry and barbarism, both of which threatened liberty of conscience. According to Thomas Warring and John Boate, the Irish were “one of the most barbarous nations of the whole earth,” “rejecting ...civility and amendment,” “a kind of reptillia...creeping on their bellies and feeding on the dust of the earth.” Even a man as tender to toleration as John Milton agreed in this assessment of the Irish character.²⁰ Henry Ireton, taking command of a troop in the Irish invasion, had a medal struck to commemorate the conquest. It depicted English soldiers setting an Irish cottage aflame as combat raged in the background. The Latin motto on the medal read, “Iustitia necessitasq iubet, or, “Justice and necessity commanded it.”²¹ In ways similar to the godly regime in the Bay Colony, the new Republic, employing the rhetoric of reformation, racialized savagery and embarked on a process of genocidal conquest for the purpose of both territorial security and expansion.

But before this would take place, paralleling New England experience again, imperial conquest required the suppression of radical dissent. G.E. Aylmer writes that the Leveller opposition to Cromwell’s design in May of 1649 was “the most serious and sustained attempt at popular revolution by physical force in seventeenth-century

²⁰ Carlin, “Cromwellian Reconquest of Ireland,” 213, 216-217.

²¹ Kelsey, *Inventing a Republic*, 56.

England.” “Yet,” continues Aylmer correctly, it was “easily suppressed.”²² Following the execution of Lockyer in April, the Leveller William Thompson organized a revolt of mutinous soldiers at Burford, Oxfordshire among the New Model regiments commanded by Colonels Hewson, Harrison, Skippon, Scroop, Ireton, and Reynolds.²³ They were to be joined by other regiments from Buckinghamshire and Salisbury. Converging in Oxfordshire after a fifty-mile forced march from London, Cromwell’s forces crushed the Burford mutiny in one of the English Revolution’s most dramatic and decisive events.²⁴ To eliminate future organizing, he ordered the summary execution of mutineers Perkins, Thomas, and Ward.

The Rump Parliament celebrated the moment, although there are indications that important members such as Ireton and Edmund Ludlow criticized Cromwell’s harsh measures. As the Leveller challenge unfolded in the spring of 1649, the Rump had made strategic moves toward alleviating grievances that the Levellers drew upon for popular support. These included offers of parliamentary elections (debated in a committee headed by Henry Vane), pardons for Levellers, payment of soldiers’ arrears, and the relief of soldiers’ widows and imprisoned debtors. When the rising at Burford was put down, all of these plans were dropped, and Vane’s election committee would not report until January. A purge removed remaining Leveller sympathizers from the army. Cromwell had now, at least in part, bridged an important gap between the New Model, the Rump Parliament, and Presbyterians. Presbyterians and Independents found common cause in the mutually sustaining victories over armed, sectarian democracy and Catholic Ireland. A Presbyterian delegation from Gloucester indicated their “great affection to

²² Aylmer, *Levellers in the English Revolution*, 44.

²³ Durston, “Let Ireland be Quiet,” 105-111.

²⁴ Aylmer, *Levellers in the English Revolution*, 45; Gregg, *Freeborn John*, 278-284.

parliament,” since they like the Rump “detested...heresy, and the proceedings of Liet. Col. John Lilburne and his party.”²⁵ With the Leveller defeat, Presbyterians and Rump MPs felt more secure from popular challenges mounted by well-organized radicals and looked forward to the expected windfall from the Irish invasion.²⁶ In 1652, the Rump passed the *Act for the Settling of Ireland*, and so initiated the wholesale redistribution of Irish lands from native Catholics to Protestant merchant “Adventurers” and settlers.²⁷ In a tract denouncing the government’s imperial policies in Ireland, radicals charged Cromwell and his Rump supporters with kneeling at the altar of Baal, a god of false promises that appealed to temporal avarice and demanded human sacrifice.²⁸

The bitter disillusion and disgust underlying such a view warrants closer examination. Looking at New England’s early history, we have explored how the tenets of practical Christianity shaped the radical critique of Indian conquest and chattel slavery. Likewise in Old England, radicals would draw on practical Christianity in their condemnations of the Republic’s first concerted attempt at imperial expansion. As Jonathan Scott has argued, these beliefs represented the real substance and true end of their political program.²⁹ In this construct, the believer wed their personal regeneration in Christ to serving the public good by working for the material and spiritual well-being of fellow citizens. In a larger sense, the gospel spirit that led to the believer’s own conversion and redemption also informed a more social vision of the “work of the age,”

²⁵ Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 196. Worden’s careful research unearthed similar Presbyterian presentments reported in the following newspapers: *Kingdom’s Faithful Scout* 25 May – 1 June 1649, 141; *Impartial Intelligencer* 30 August – 6 September 1649, 211; *Perfect Occurrences* 22-29 June 1649, 1093.

²⁶ Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 193-194; Firth and Rait, eds., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, 2:110-121.

²⁷ Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate*, 305.

²⁸ *The Levellers Vindicated* (London, 1649)

²⁹ Scott, *England’s Troubles*, 231, 232, 236, 247-257, 261, 265-267.

when men and women left free to pursue their own religious truth began to believe in the perfectibility of themselves and the world around them. Practical Christianity demanded that believers imitate Christ's humble service to the poor, the outcast, and the disenfranchised. For the radicals, it defined the purpose of the revolution and the ends to which good government aspired, which were ultimately the reformation of the soul and civil society. William Walwyn explained how this soul liberty, while struggling against the inward bondage of sin, also infused the believer with the spirit of Christ "the servant," who alleviated the suffering of his fellow creatures by battling against all forms of outward bondage. This struggle took aim at forms of outward bondage that ranged from poverty and destitution to absolute monarchy and mercenary armies. Triumph over outward bondage fulfilled the true law of common equity, which would lead to the spiritual, social, political, and economic regeneration of the nation. Soul and civil liberty, proclaimed Walwyn, was

Universal love to all mankind without respect of persons, opinions, societies...churches or forms of worship...Certainly, were we all busied in this short necessary truth...we should soon become practical Christians; and take more pleasure in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting and comforting the sick, relieving the aged, weak and impotent; in delivering of poor prisoners, supporting of poor families, or in freeing a Commonwealth from all tyrants.³⁰

According to Walwyn, "practical Christians" would be known by "their works." In another pamphlet, he accused supporters of the Irish conquest for confusing liberty of conscience with the antichristian pursuit of their own self-interest,

Where is charity? Where is love? That true Christian love?...For he who hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother lack, and shuteth up his bowels of compassion, how dwelleth the love of God in him?³¹

³⁰ William Walwyn, *The Vanitie of the Present Churches* (London, 1649); Also quoted in Scott, *England's Troubles*, 253-54.

³¹ Walwyn, *Just Defense*, 383-384.

Faith without works was dead, and a godly government should embody the policies of a living faith to realize its true end, the relief of poverty and the conquest of temporal injustice. An anonymous Leveller said in 1659 that in the free state of the godly, “the inward truth of men’s religion” would be judged by “their outward acts of justice and mercy.”³² In 1649, William Walwyn described a true commonwealth in much the same way. A republic should be

established with contentment and security for all sorts of people...to support those disenfranchised...to provide for those who refuse not labor... as for turning the world upside down...I am for plucking up of all the poles and hedges in the nation.

While Walwyn’s contributions to the Leveller movement were invaluable, his thought cannot be contextualized merely within the movement’s body of literature. His practical Christianity, and that of other Levellers, existed within a wider spectrum of radical thought and political organization practiced across the Atlantic world during the period of New and Old England’s troubles. Given that the war’s conclusion witnessed the birth of the English Republic, the question remains as to how the politicization of practical Christianity during the English Civil War contributed to the shaping of republican thought, and how this in turn would come to shape how republican thought measured itself in relation to England’s imperial expansion.

Scholars of English republicanism, while not blind to religious considerations in general, have traditionally neglected practical Christianity as a source of commonwealth principles. In many ways, as John Pocock, Quentin Skinner, and Blair Worden have convincingly demonstrated, the execution of Charles I forced English political thinkers

³² *The Leveller* (London, 1659).

and statesmen to wrestle with the problem of first defining principles of republican government and then the constitutional framework that would make them practicable. Men such as Marchmont Nedham, James Harrington, and John Milton undertook this effort, and turned to classical history and Renaissance thought, consulting the works of Aristotle, Cicero, Sallust, and Machiavelli, among others, for guidance on how to govern a commonwealth devoid of kings or rule by “a single person.” Although the scholars mentioned above emphasize the secular orientation of these authors, they also show how apocalyptic and providential thought shaped republican language.³³

This scholarship has revealed a common but protean set of principles that marked the writings of seventeenth-century English republican thinkers. Among these were to be found a belief that all just governments embraced the concept of popular sovereignty, the rule of law (as opposed to the rule of men), and a conviction that the “public spiritedness” of citizens in the form of disinterested, active participation in the affairs of the commonwealth would preserve liberty and the common good. Following their classical and Renaissance masters, English republicans held that corruption stemmed from factions in government who advanced their own interest at the expense of the people. Arbitrary government, defined as that pursued outside the rule of law, equaled tyranny. Martial vigor was required to increase the bonds of affection between the people and the state in order to protect the republic from its external enemies, to expand territory, to secure an equitable economic base, and to preserve the citizenry from the degenerative effects of soft-living and complacency. Reason, law, and public service would cultivate the public-

³³ Chief among these works were: James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (London, 1656); John Milton, *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a True Commonwealth* (London, 1660); Marchmont Nedham, *A True State of the Case of the Commonwealth* (London, 1654); *The Excellencie of a Free State* (London, 1656).

spirited virtue that would in turn restrain avarice, passion, and corruption to build a republic of justice and increase. This would require a constitution whose laws embodied these principles and a governmental structure durable enough to peacefully reconcile the popular will with the wisdom of political elites. The constitution, which balanced power proportionately between its monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic institutions, must be resilient enough to adapt the machinery of government to changing material realities. This would be particularly important given the perpetual motion of the state as it continually mobilized for war to increase its territorial dominion and cultivate the civitas of the citizenry. But as Blair Worden has written, “It is as a politics of virtue that republicanism most clearly defines itself,” a view embraced by the prolific John Pocock, whose own work emphasizes the “civic humanism” of republican thinkers, particularly James Harrington.³⁴

Although their analysis of republican principles converges in many ways, Worden and Pocock disagree on when they became operable in English politics, a question of obvious concern to this dissertation. Pocock extends his interpretation back to the beginning of the English Civil War and Charles’ answer to the Nineteen Propositions, which he sees as the point when the government “without ceasing to manifest the element of monarchy, is being presented as a classical republic.”³⁵ He argues further that the Civil War witnessed definitive “Machiavellian moments,” or points in time when

³⁴ This summation draws heavily from Blair Worden, “Marchmont Nedham and the Beginnings of English Republicanism,” in Wootton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society, 1649-1776*, 46-81, quote on 46; Wootton, “Introduction: The Republican Tradition: From Commonwealth to Common Sense,” in Wootton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society, 1649-1776*, 1-45; J.G.A. Pocock, ed., *The Political Works of James Harrington* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), Introduction; *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 361-422.

³⁵ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 363.

governments, confronting their mortality in the face of fortune, seek to preserve and increase their power in fidelity to their principles of justice.³⁶ While drawing on classical republican concepts of virtue and time, patterns of political thought during the war also adapted to particular political and material contexts, and in light of the religiosity of the age, became infused with an apocalyptic sense of national regeneration. For Pocock, the political language that emerged from the turmoil became a critical part of a wider Atlantic tradition, rooted in Renaissance Italy, which would continue to shape political events up through the American Revolution.

Worden, on the other hand, sees the first manifestation of English republicanism in the writings of Marchmont Nedham. Unlike Pocock, he refuses to recognize the Levellers as republicans. “There is precious little evidence of republicanism during the civil wars,” Worden explains, because although anti-monarchical sentiments ran strong, nobody presented an alternative governmental system. This view reflects one of Worden’s most important qualifications, that a true “republican” entertained a solid vision of the “political architecture” designed to embrace both principles of political justice and the practical concerns of a government as it faced the dim prospects of its own survival. The Levellers, he maintains, while against the “rule of a single person,” clung to principles of the ancient constitution which prevented them from developing a truly republican system. He sees their opposition to regicide as key to their traditionalism, because for Worden, regicide, which embraced change and innovation, made English republicanism. The execution of Charles, while not a republican act in and of itself, allowed republicanism to become possible because it forced men to look outside of

³⁶ *ibid.*, viii, 375-377.

English history for precedents on which to found the new commonwealth. What they found, according to Worden, were Aristotle and Cicero, and even more importantly, Machiavelli, whom they honored for favoring “popular governments,” the rule of law, and the imperial glory of conquests that crushed threatening rivals, grew national wealth, and cultivated civic virtue and patriotism.

Like Pocock, Worden finds the definitive statement of English republicanism in the work of James Harrington. According to Worden’s reading of Harrington, if England chose the proper political architecture, the republic would escape the seemingly inescapable destiny of corruption that had led to the demise of its classical predecessors. Eluding fortune in this way would culminate in an apocalyptic transformation of the nation, which, as prophetic history revealed, would inspire a worldwide rejection of tyranny and a new age of human freedom. English republicanism then, was a “sudden creation,” produced by the contingencies of history and not the accretion of political languages. Having rendered Charles a criminal and an enemy of the commonwealth, his executioners seized the opportunity to reconceptualize the relationship between human nature, political stability, time, and justice.³⁷

While it would be an understatement to call Pocock and Worden’s contributions intellectually able and important, neither of their views, which have been oversimplified here, will suffice. First, Worden wrongly argues against the Levellers as republicans by citing their failure to present an alternative to the ancient constitution. As we have

³⁷ Worden, “Beginnings of English Republicanism,” 48-54; “James Harrington and the Commonwealth of Oceana,” in Wootton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society, 1649-1776*, 82-110; Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 383-400. Worden’s view on the origins of English Republicanism may be contrasted with that of Sean Kelsey, *Inventing a Republic*, cited above, and David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Both Kelsey and Norbrook identify a commonwealth, or quasi-republican tradition stretching back to the Tudor era.

explored earlier, the Triploe Heath and New Market engagements, as well as the *Agreement of the People* would have fundamentally altered the ancient constitution by overhauling traditional notions of popular sovereignty, the franchise, the character of civic participation, and most importantly to Worden, the “political architecture” of the projected commonwealth. But as Jonathan Scott points out, republicanism need not require an articulated vision of political structure and form.³⁸ Although it was important to the radicals in many respects, constitutional form was not their first concern. This seems to be a requirement imposed by later historians that ultimately disqualifies radicals from inclusion in a vital intellectual tradition. Furthermore, as I will argue in the remainder of the dissertation, Pocock and Worden’s mutual insistence that truly republican ideas relied principally (although not exclusively) on classical or Renaissance bodies of thought hampered them from seeing other intellectual traditions. Among these was the practical Christianity of the radicals, who insisted upon popular sovereignty, mixed government, public spiritedness, martial vigor, disinterested rule, the rule of law, and vigilance against corruption and tyranny as political ends to accomplish their ultimately religious objectives. Notwithstanding, it was the practical Christian, religious end of the radical political project that made it truly republican; it did this by advancing the idea that the destruction of both inward and outward bondage side-stepped Machiavellian moments to produce a virtuous people and a free state. This would fulfill England’s role as redeemer nation in the Protestant Reformation, when profane history would be eclipsed by a millennial golden age, an idea also central to Harrington’s thought. What remains to be seen is how the history of the Interregnum, particularly the

³⁸ Scott, *England’s Troubles*, 229-246.

imperial expansion of the revolutionary regime, would ultimately define the radicals as abolitionists of the “antichristian bondage” that the state deemed necessary to expand its power and the power of its ruling-class at home and abroad.

Despite its revolutionary origins and unrivalled legislative power, the reign of the Rump Parliament (1648-1653) fell far short of radical expectations for reform.³⁹ This may be explained by a combination of factors. First, legislation concerning Ireland took up much of its time, as would the ensuing war in Scotland (1650) to subdue the Presbyterian-Royalist alliance. Two years later, the first Anglo-Dutch War (1652-1654) would consume much of its attention. Both wars will be discussed later in the chapter. Secondly, most Rump MPs, with the exception of members such as Henry Marten, were not convinced republicans, and even Marten, like the vast majority of his colleagues, did not share the godly enthusiasm of the radicals. Only seventy of its members favored regicide.⁴⁰ It also faced an unprecedented task in English history: a Parliament obliged to legislate, approve, and enforce laws in its own name. It would also devise and conduct all foreign policy. Although novel in these respects, the Rump remained an inherently conservative body; many, if not all of the Rumpers agreed with Ireton about the necessity of preserving the power of property as the foundation of good government.⁴¹ It therefore looked with ironic skepticism at innovation and forestalled legal, political, economic, and church reforms. Riddled by anxiety concerning its regicidal origins, it strove to enhance its prestige in the eyes of a country still reeling from the King’s execution. Its

³⁹ For work on the Rump Parliament, see the following: Austin Woolrych, *From Commonwealth to Protectorate*, 1-102; Blair Worden, *The Rump Parliament*, *passim*, and Sean Kelsey, *Inventing a Republic*, *passim*, all cited above. Useful summaries of the Rump may be found in Ronald Hutton, *The British Republic, 1649-1660* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 4-57 and Toby Barnard, *The English Republic, 1649-1660* (London: Longman, 1997), 8-23.

⁴⁰ Barnard, *English Republic*, 10.

⁴¹ Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 33-60.

international status suffered for these reasons as well, even among sister republics like the Netherlands.

Another explanation for the Rump's lack of reforming zeal may be explained by the inchoate demands for reform, which came from disparate circles, certainly not all of them radical. Presbyterians wanted church reform on their model, a crack-down on sectarian "heresy," and constitutional bulwarks against Leveller-styled political reform. As for the radicals, they pled for a free press, religious toleration, the relief of debtors and the poor, the end of capital punishment for property crimes, full employment, state-subsidies for war widows and orphans, the expansion of the franchise to the propertyless, an end to trading monopolies, tithes, enclosure, and excise taxes, and an equitable redistribution of confiscated Royalist land to the landless. These petitions reflected both the practical Christian convictions and class positions of many of the radicals, although, of course, many of them were men of property who sympathized with the poor and disenfranchised out of religious conviction.⁴² Radicals were divided as to what reforms in the legal and political structure might achieve their practical Christian ends. Their proposals ranged from implementing the *Agreements of the People* to abolishing the common law and replacing it with the Mosaic Code, although others combined what they considered the best of secular and sacred traditions. The Rump cannot be blamed for its confusion in this light, although it must be said that few of its members found much merit in any of these proposals, particularly in the scope with which they would redefine the relationship between property and political power.⁴³

⁴² Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 105-162; Capp, *Fifth Monarchy*, 54-63.

⁴³ Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate*, 16-19; Consult the following for radical proposals for constitutional reform rejected by the Rump: *A Model of a New Representative* (London, 1651); Daniel

Finding the way forward proved particularly difficult. If the Rump proceeded in radical directions it would continue to alienate its already tenuous Presbyterian support, but if it ignored the radicals altogether, it risked losing potential allies at a time when it remained exceptionally unpopular. A core of republican MPs led by Henry Marten, who were at least sympathetic to various aspects of radical reform, did emerge, including Edmund Ludlow, Cornelius Holland, Henry Smyth, and the Chaloner brothers.⁴⁴ Henry Vane does not seem to have joined this group, perhaps because his energies were directed more towards building a commonwealth navy and forming an alliance with England's sister republic, the Netherlands.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, in the words of Blair Worden, the Rump took only "tepid" steps towards legal, religious, social, and economic reform. In the end, this would prove its undoing.⁴⁶

Trans-Atlantic radicals in the Coleman Street network criticized the Rump for its failures and in the process articulated a practical Christian variant of republican thought. We saw earlier how other New Englanders had followed Vane, Williams, and Gorton back to England at the end of the Civil War. These figures included, among others, William Aspinwall, John Clarke, Thomas Venner, and Mary and William Dyer. William Aspinwall, one of Anne Hutchinson's most stalwart defenders, condemned the tyranny of economic exploitation. He believed it stemmed from privileging self-interest over the public good of the commonwealth, and he accused the government of neglecting the poor and disenfranchised. Only governments founded upon principles consistent with practical Christianity could claim a legitimate right to rule.

Taylor, *Certain Queries or Considerations* (London, 1651); *A Declaration of Divers Elders and Brethren* (London, 1651)

⁴⁴ Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 218-219

⁴⁵ Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 139-191; Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 292-313.

⁴⁶ Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 204.

If you protect the people of God from the injuries put upon them by carnal men and defend the poor and fatherless and deliver the poor and needy then you act and rule for Christ and demonstrate you receive your power and authority from him.⁴⁷

John Clarke, late of Rhode Island, explained that the purpose of commonwealth government was to protect

the outward man('s)...carnal ends...which being diligently attended to tends to the peace, liberty and prosperity of a civil state... which end is the preservation of itself, the whole and every particular part, and person, belonging thereunto, safe in their person, name and estate from him, or them that would rise up visibly and oppress, or wrong them in the same.⁴⁸

To safeguard the physical well-being and material welfare of all the commonwealth's citizens, Clarke wrote in *Ill News from New England* that

in case any be impoverished, or fall in decay in their outward man and estates by age, sickness, fire, or by some other way or hand of God; so far as their present strength extends, by this power they are to be employed, and where it fails, to be relieved, and by an equal and just levy of their neighbors estates to be taken also by force in case there be not so much love and charity in them towards their poor distressed neighbors to constrain them thereunto, and by the same way also to maintain itself, and all other just undertakings that may be presented for the preservation of the whole.⁴⁹

Clarke would not leave universal love within the realms of mystical spiritual expression; he used it instead to provide government with the sovereign authority to preserve the common good by safeguarding civil, spiritual, and, critically, material equity.

In 1649, Robert Bennett, Clarke's trans-Atlantic partner in the organization of Baptist churches in London, Bristol, and Rhode Island, urged his friend Sir Hereford Waller to avoid self-interested gain while serving the Rump in Ireland. Bennett reminded Waller that as God was no respecter of persons, he was obliged to treat the Irish under his charge in the same way that he would care for the Elect.

⁴⁷ William Aspinwall, *The Legislative Power is Christ's Peculiar Prerogative* (London, 1656), n.p.

⁴⁸ John Clarke, *Ill News from New England* (London, 1652), A3. Parentheses mine.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, A3

To take much self-advancement...will certainly be the last way to honor godliness amongst men...relieve the oppressed and to hear the complaints of poor grieved afflicted people and to deliver them from him that is too mighty for him; few know the heart of an oppressed man, and I see few that make it their business to know it, which is a sad omen in my eye in these days of pretended reformation; never greater complaints of oppression, of loss of liberty amongst the poor people than now, and truly it is plain it is not causeless the issue will be sad unless some stand up in time to lead us...still men shall be kept under and made the servants of men and God's people cannot go out free, many a poor soul with(out) his cottage over his head is weeping with wife and children, while their oppressors are carousing merrily in their blood, for want of a Job, or a righteous lawgiver to take in judgement, and to bring the wheel upon the wicked...show mercy to the poor...be the poor man's advocate when you sit upon the bench and be sure...for this work I have better hopes for Ireland than England, we are here a rotten unrighteous people, it is a wonder that we are spared so long...⁵⁰

Far from advancing the interest of a single faction, class, or propertied interest, this strain of radical thought during the Interregnum argued that the commonwealth should be tender, whether in Ireland or New or Old England, towards the peoples' spiritual and material welfare.

Within the spectrum of radical thought, Gerrard Winstanley took practical Christianity the farthest in his vision of the post-war commonwealth. All governments that failed to "regard the cries of the poor" were doomed to fail, for the "selfish, murdering spirit" had produced man's original fall, and the continual degeneration of human society.

But how came man's fall in the first? I answer. The outward objects of riches, honors, being set before the living soul, imaginary covetousness, which is the absence of true light, moves the man to close with those objects, and to seek content without him. And through this dark night power, wars, divisions, and discontent arises in mankind, to tear and devour itself.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Folger Library, Bennett Mss Mss X.d. 483(50).

⁵¹ Most of Winstanley's writings are published in primary source collections. One of the best, with an illuminating introduction, is Christopher Hill, ed., *Gerrard Winstanley, The Law of Freedom and Other Writings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983). The passages quoted here are from Winstanley's *Fire in the Bush* (London, 1650), 472, 489. The secondary scholarship on Winstanley is voluminous. For some interesting recent work, see Andrew Bradstock, ed., *Winstanley and the Diggers, 1649-1999* (London, 2002) and John Gurney, "Gerrard Winstanley and the Digger Movement in Waltham and Cobham," *Historical Journal* 37 (1994).

“The true law of magistracy” destroyed the foundation of “self-interest and covetousness,” the “kingly power” of private property. With the produce of the godly commonwealth in the common treasury available to each according to their respective needs, Winstanley saw

the Tree of Life...new Jerusalem come down to earth, to fetch earth up...to live in the employment of Christ...this is the life that will bring the true community; and destroy murdering property...universal love will have all saved.”⁵²

Winstanley represented an extreme in republican thought, but nonetheless his condemnations of economic self-interest took place within a much wider radical continuum that rejected the priority contemporary republican theorists such as Ireton placed on securing private property as the foundation of liberty.⁵³

It is impossible to tell exactly when Henry Vane began to define the ends of republican government in practical Christian terms. If he entertained them during his busy days as a naval administrator during the Rump Parliament, he must have found them impossible to reconcile with the policies he formed. He would only air these ideas publicly in 1654 when felt that commonwealth had deteriorated into wholesale tyranny. In 1654, Vane subscribed to the “royal law” or golden rule of Christ, “which forbids us to do that unto another which we would not have them do unto us, were we in their condition.” Vane used this idea as the foundation of his conceptualization of citizenship

⁵² Winstanley, *Fire in the Bush*, in Hill, ed., *The Law of Freedom*, 453-454.

⁵³ G.E. Aylmer discusses Winstanley in the context of other republicans who embraced practical Christianity in their politics. See “The Religion of Gerrard Winstanley,” in Brain Manning, ed., *Politics, Religion and the English Civil War* (London, 1973).

in the commonwealth.⁵⁴ He defined the just principles of republican government against the prevailing political norm of

that great idol, self-interest, which hath ever since so skillfully insinuated into the desire and heart of every natural man, that by its influence, the whole world seems to be governed, as well in religion as civil policy, being able to bring that gain and advantage to the observers thereof, which as a powerful bait the Devil makes use of to bribe the conscience, and by degrees to draw off the heart from God, and from sincere love to all righteous and good principles, as in the exercise thereof they lie to thwart its designs.⁵⁵

Since an early age, and on both sides of the Atlantic, Vane had moved within the highest circles of government, bearing witness to self-interest's corrosive impact on commonwealths. This "spirit of man" culminated in arbitrary government, with each "doing of his own will and procuring his own glory rather than gods." Instead, good citizens should "speak with the tongues of men and angels, know all mysteries, have all faith, so as to remove mountains, and give all they have to the poor..." so that the commonwealth could provide "the very anvil to be formed into what may answer the true ends of magistracy and common good of man."⁵⁶ Perhaps the passionate tone of his writing indicates that Vane had reflected on how he, having engaged in the vicissitudes of politic deal-making and diplomacy, perhaps with greater intensity than any man during the period, had failed to live up his own spiritual expectations. This, as he would write during the Protectorate, was the common fault of the godly party.

During the Rump years, however, Vane busied himself with diplomatic and naval affairs as one of the forty members of the Council of State. On domestic issues, he often locked horns with the republican, Henry Marten. Vane opposed Marten's initiative to

⁵⁴ Henry Vane, *A Healing Question* (London, 1656).

⁵⁵ Henry Vane, *The Retired Man's Meditations* (London, 1655) n.p.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 134-135.

settle a dispute between East Anglicans led by John Lilburne and a joint-stock company that had headed the enclosure of the Fenlands. This would have led to profits for the company's investors, but dispossession for the Fenlanders, most of whom had fought for Parliament and who had become a cause celebre of sorts. Vane quite likely took possession of much of this land himself when the Royalist Earl of Lindsey, who held the original title to the land, was stripped of it by Parliament.⁵⁷ In March 1653, Vane supported a measure opposed by Marten that would have increased the property qualification for the franchise to 200 pounds.⁵⁸ This bill was unacceptable even to many reactionary members of the Rump. Vane did act in concert with Marten on the matter of religious toleration, opposing bills aimed at the sects and helping Rhode Island secure another charter in 1652 that guaranteed its religious freedom and permanent independence from Massachusetts.⁵⁹ If anything, Vane's actions debunk the Presbyterian notion that radical religion translated directly into a threat to property.

Oliver Cromwell shared Vane's views on toleration, but it appears by late 1651 that they parted ways over the Rump's future. Vane backed a bill to recruit new members for the Rump with proven loyalty to the new commonwealth. Cromwell, in contrast, favored dissolving the Rump, which as both sectarian radicals and army leaders agreed, stood as the biggest obstacle to thorough reform.⁶⁰ At this point, Cromwell, and not Henry Vane, seemed most inclined to push through the legal and religious reforms favored by most radicals.

⁵⁷ Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 153-154; *House of Commons Journal* (hereafter *H CJ*), 7: 9 April 1652.

⁵⁸ Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 151; *H CJ*, 7: 30 March 1653.

⁵⁹ Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 154; *H CJ*, 7: 14 May 1652.

⁶⁰ Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 151; Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 219, 221, 266; Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 304. Adamson and Folland argue that Vane opposed the dissolution because he feared a military dictatorship, but offer no evidence to support this point.

Rather than domestic issues, Vane's opposition to dissolution owed more to his views on England's problems with the Dutch. His attempts between 1650-1652 to strike a peaceful union with Holland failed after it was discovered that England's sister republic had armed Irish and Scottish rebels bent on the Rump's destruction. Cromwell, however, expressed reservations about war with the Dutch. From the general's perspective, one Protestant power should not oppose another while Catholic tyrants like Spain continued to thrive. Cromwell also wished to see certain elements of legal and religious reform carried through, and feared rightly that the Dutch war would forestall reform in the Rump.⁶¹ But Vane, now recognizing the depth of Dutch antipathy, abandoned diplomacy in May of 1652, and for the second time took command of a Parliamentary war party.

Events later that December vaulted Vane to the head of the naval commission, perhaps the most powerful foreign policy post in the commonwealth. On December 10, two weeks after the Dutch Admiral Von Trompe had dealt the English navy a humiliating defeat, the Rump dissolved the Council of State's authority in naval administration and devolved it upon a committee of four, headed by Vane, accountable only to Parliament. This left Vane free to reform the navy, which he did brilliantly.⁶² First, he made extensive changes in the treatment of personnel, recognizing that the practice of impressment damaged rather than strengthened the navy. Impressment demoralized the men, conflicted with republican principles, and led to mutinies like the one in the fall of 1652 that weakened Admiral Blake's fleet. Vane encouraged voluntary service through increased pay, the reform of harsh disciplinary codes, and improvements to the quantity and quality of victual and medical provisions for the men. These reforms, however, did

⁶¹ Ibid, 58-63, 70-79, 109, 11, 185.

⁶² Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 178-179.

not preclude additional impressments, although Vane supplemented the ranks of the navy with 1000 soldiers from the New Model Army. He secured revenue for the fleet by securing a tax increase and by allocating money for the navy originally designated to the army. Vane also sought to discontinue the Council of State's micromanagement of tactical operations, leaving decision-making power to seasoned salts who knew the business better. None of these measures could have endeared him to Cromwell, who had lost influence over the war's conduct.⁶³ While the war raged at sea, Vane had re-entered negotiations, coming close to agreement with the Dutch on a proposal for a republican union dominated by England.⁶⁴ This would achieve the potent type of republic lauded by Machiavelli, where in alliance with a subordinate power, a commonwealth could expand its dominion and increase its wealth and glory. A Dutch union could thus present a realistic threat to Spain's monarchical empire while simultaneously turning back the Counter-Reformation.⁶⁵ As the architect of the republican navy, Vane opposed the dissolution of the Rump because he wanted his Admiralty Commission to remain in power to conduct the war. A change in government might place its management, and delicate diplomacy, in less able hands. As Thomas Scot later remarked, in pursuing the Dutch War through to a conclusive victory, England "might have brought them (Holland) to a oneness with us. This we might have done in four or five months. We never bid fairer for being masters of the whole world."⁶⁶ The growing tension between Vane and

⁶³ Ibid., 180-190; Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 312; *H CJ*, 7: 9 February 1653.

⁶⁴ Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 158-190; Steven C.A. Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650-1658* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 11-17, 23-27, 32, 54.

⁶⁵ Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism*, 1-22.

⁶⁶ Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 330-331.

Cromwell over the conduct of the Dutch War, as well as their conflict over the Rump's possible dismissal, would explode in dramatic fashion in the spring of 1653.

Although successful in the war against the Dutch, the political and social conservatism, class interests, fear of radical religion, and desire to preserve its own power prevented the Rump from pursuing a program of practical Christian reform. The Rump moved against tolerance to appease Independents by passing the Blasphemy Act (1650), but rejected another initiative proposed by Cromwell's chaplain John Owen that promoted an Independent church settlement and the propagation of the gospel in Wales.⁶⁷ It also alienated radical republicans with the banishment of John Lilburne in 1652. But with the army's triumph over Scots Royalists at Worcester (1651), it began to devote more its attention to the Rump's failures, and brought increasing pressure to bear on Cromwell to see that Parliament went to work on reform. These pressures, not to mention a 700,000 pound national debt, finally prompted the Rump to declare in April 1653 that elections would be held the following November.⁶⁸

The Rump Parliament had failed, however, to guarantee that new MPs would uphold the principles of the revolution. Cromwell's officers, Independents, and the sects feared that the new commons would include Cavaliers and Presbyterians who would wage a counter-revolution, perhaps to bring back monarchy.⁶⁹ Fearing this outcome, Cromwell, accompanied by a military guard, personally dissolved the Rump as it sat at Westminster on April 20, 1653. When the soldiers filed into the House, Vane shouted, "This is not honest; yea, it is against morality and common honesty!" Cromwell, finally

⁶⁷ Firth and Rait, eds., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, 2: 410; Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate*, 38, 53-54, 58-59.

⁶⁸ Barnard, *English Republic*, 19-21.

⁶⁹ Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate*, 56-102; Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 317-344.

exasperated by his old ally, replied, “O Sir Henry Vane! Sir Henry Vane! The Lord deliver me from Sir Henry Vane!” He then called Vane a “juggler,” a contemporary term for a cunning politician, and rejoined that Vane himself had no “common honesty.”⁷⁰

The Rump’s passing produced few mourners. Its demise proved “acceptable amongst the generality,” wrote John Evelyn the minister, who went on to say that “never men lost their honor with less pity.” In contrast with Henry Vane, many in the navy welcomed the dissolution, including Admirals John Lawson and William Penn. Navy man John Portman, also a Coleman Street sectarian, wrote of “the dawning of the new day of redemption.” On Coleman Street itself, John Canne, Edmund Chillenden, and William Aspinwall all cheered the Rump’s fall, and looked to Cromwell as a “Moses,” as did their fellow millenarians John Rogers and John Spittlehouse.⁷¹ Hundreds of people gathered at St. Thomas Apostle to hear Rogers preach. He hailed Cromwell as ‘the great deliverer of his people.’⁷² Despite their conflicted attitudes toward Cromwell, radicals continued to hold out hope during the days of the myopic Rump that he could serve as a possible instrument of God, who in turning out the old members would turn the attention of the government to the redress of godly grievances. Shortly after the dissolution, Aspinwall wrote, “O, that men in place of authority, power and trust, civil and military, would seriously consider what and with whom they have to do in these refining times.”⁷³

Both the caution and optimism of Aspinwall’s exhortation are telling. Hailing Cromwell as Moses, the saints expected great things of him. They entrusted him with

⁷⁰ Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 317; Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 336; Abbot, *Writings and Speeches*, 2: 638, 641-644.

⁷¹ Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism*, 116-117; Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate*, 114-115; Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 62-63.

⁷² John Rogers, *To His Excellency the Lord General Cromwell: A Few Proposals Relating to Civil Government* (London, 1653); Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 63.

⁷³ Aspinwall, *Brief Description*, 6.

power in the same way James Harrington would with Lord Archon, the fictional leader of *Oceana*, who purged the commonwealth of its corrupters, forged a republican constitution, and stepped graciously away from power in the interest of the public good.⁷⁴ The saints now called upon Cromwell and the officers to appoint worthy members to a new parliament, which would set about the work of godly reformation in earnest, according to true, practical Christian principles. In doing so, Cromwell would employ his might to uplift the people to complete the revolution and the regeneration of the nation as a bastion of Protestant virtue and liberty.⁷⁵ Such hopes illustrate how any use of the power entrusted to Cromwell that worked toward his or his court's self-interest would thus be perceived as an act of apostasy, corruption, and tyranny.

The body known as the "Nominated Assembly," better known to contemporaries by a more colorful title, the "Barebone's Parliament," first convened in July 1653. This nickname was bestowed in honor of Praisegod Barebone, an exceedingly vocal and active member of an assembly that included many prominent Independents and sectarians. The intensely millenarian Major General Thomas Harrison had the largest hand in selecting delegates on the basis of their commitment to the godly reform of the church and the common law.⁷⁶ Opened with a stirring speech by Cromwell that raised the millennial fervor of many of its members, Barebone's immediately set about a program of legal reform modeled on the Mosaic Code that imbued the radicals' practical Christian sensibilities.

⁷⁴ Blair Worden, "Harrington's *Oceana*: Origins and Aftermath, 1651-1660," in Wootton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society*, 119.

⁷⁵ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 64; Aspinwall, *Brief Description*, 4-6.

⁷⁶ Barnard, *The English Republic*, 35.

Saints had long expected this of the revolution, and looked forward to the nation's liberation from outward bondage, particularly in its economic forms.⁷⁷ A set of laws gathered from the Old Testament, the Mosaic Code condemned the concept of profit maximization, or usury, and looked forward to a day of "jubilee" when slaves and prisoners would be freed and debtors released from their charges, with the poor benefiting from an equitable distribution of land and resources.⁷⁸ It also explicitly outlawed man-stealing, or the forcible placement of persons into involuntary servitude.⁷⁹ Preached up in Boston by John Cotton, Moses' laws found staunch support in London from Cotton's former congregant, William Aspinwall, who despite his friction with the minister during the Antinomian Controversy, had originally admired the minister for his views on free grace and legal reform on the Biblical model. After his return to London in 1652, Aspinwall published Cotton's treatise on the Mosaic Code for the benefit of the Barebone's Parliament.⁸⁰

Led by Barebone, Harrison, and Arthur Squib, the parliament of the saints acted quickly and proposed to abolish the Court of Chancery, whose onerous fees and procedures disproportionately kept the poor from seeking and receiving legal redress. It passed debtor law reforms, repealed the excise tax, and demanded a more extensive system of poor relief. With increasingly extreme positions advanced by a core of sectarian members, trouble between the Barebone's Parliament and Cromwell deepened

⁷⁷ See, for instance, Aspinwall's tract entitled, *The Legislative Power is Christ's Peculiar Prerogative* (London, 1656) and Venner's manifesto, *A Door of Hope Opened* (London, 1657).

⁷⁸ W.C. Ford, "Cotton's Moses His Judicials," *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, 2nd Series, 16 (1902); Jesper Rosenmeier, "John Cotton on Usury," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47 (1990), 503-22; Mark Valeri, "Religious Discipline and the Market: Puritans and the Issue of Usury," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54 (1997), 747.

⁷⁹ Barnard, *The English Republic*, 24-34; Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 71-74.

⁸⁰ Ford, "Moses His Judicials," 16; Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 101-102.

with a bill that set new limits to the executive's control over Parliament's reform measures. One reform included eliminating capital punishment for petty property crimes, a measure that Cromwell himself had previously endorsed.⁸¹

Radicals next moved to strike down tithing and capital punishment for blasphemy, measures that showed how Barebones' sectarians pursued a selective sampling of the Mosaic Code, favoring the measures that provided for economic justice.⁸² Aspinwall himself did not expect members to accede to "every iota" of the code. He allowed for a wide "latitude...not thinking it meet to tie up all men's judgments in every scruple." Rather, in debating what parts of the code to use, he would leave "each one to the liberty of their judgments, until fuller light break forth," an important caution against rigid theocracy that he gained from his New England experience.⁸³

Importantly, sectarians within the assembly resisted calls from Independents for the establishment of a loosely confederated national church, viewing it as the reintroduction of episcopacy in another form. These policies showed the commitment of so-called religious fanatics to the religious free-thinking that they regarded as the foundation of political freedom. Barebones' Independents, however, moved in the opposite direction. A national church controlled through a court of triers would enforce doctrine and discipline against blasphemies directed towards the clergy, magistrates, and national government. Tithes were also a form of property and taking these away, in the eyes of more conservative brethren, loosened property's grip on power. Old fears resurfaced that the end of unlimited toleration was "to have all things in common." It

⁸¹ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 70-71; Barnard, *The English Republic*, 24-34; Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate*, 159, 163, 215, 219, 268, 292-298, 299,

⁸² Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 70-77; Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate*, 158, 162, 187, 207-220.

⁸³ Aspinwall, *Legislative Power*, A3.

seemed to many on the Council of State that the dissolution of the Rump had now resurrected the ghosts of 1647-1649, with the added irony that these “levelers” had taken power through the direct appointment of leading army officers. With Cromwell’s support, Independent members dissolved the assembly in December of 1653.⁸⁴ For the second time, Cromwell, who had championed toleration and legal reform had turned back a revolutionary project born from the war against the King that he had so ably commanded.⁸⁵

At the end of the Civil War, Levellers had used ancient constitutional and natural rights language to justify their demands, while in the Nominated Assembly, the Mosaic Code provided a general, although not exclusive template for the radicals. We may see their qualified advocacy of the Mosaic Code as a practical Christian approach to the problem of reform that the Rump Parliament and Council of State evaded by silencing the Levellers. And so, a common emphasis on using republican forms of government to achieve practical Christian ends bound together the two most pronounced phases of reform during the English Revolution, the 1647-1649 and July–December 1653 periods.

The imposition of a new constitution, the Instrument of Government Act, followed the dissolution of the Nominated Assembly. Drafted by John Lambert, the charter granted Oliver Cromwell the executive office of Lord Protector of Great Britain.

⁸⁴ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 73-74; Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate*, 343-348; Rogers, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 35-38. Barry Coward, *The Cromwellian Protectorate* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 7-20; Cromwell’s personal role in the dissolution of Barebone’s Parliament is far from clear. What is clear, however, is that he loathed the potentially subversive threat the assembly’s thirty proposed statutes posed to the power of the propertied interest to retain hierarchical control of Parliament, the courts, and the church. Most historians have accepted that the authoritarian character of Cromwell’s regime marked a counter-revolution of sorts. An engaging reaffirmation of this interpretation may be found in Sean Kelsey’s, *Inventing a Republic*, cited above. For dissenting views, see William Lamont, “The Left and its Past: Revisiting the 1650s,” *History Workshop Journal* 23 (1987); Austin Woolrych, “The Cromwellian Protectorate: A Military Dictatorship,” *History* 75 (1990), 207-31.

⁸⁵ For Cromwell as advocate of the poor, see Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 274-280.

Evidence exists that Cromwell seemed less than eager to assume this title, fearing it too closely resembled the monarchy abolished in 1649. Indeed, many of his former comrades looked suspiciously on the trappings of royalty that gilded Cromwell's installation as Lord Protector in January 1654. Enacted without Parliament's consent, the new constitution endowed Cromwell and his allies on the Council of State with both executive and legislative authority, which revived criticisms leveled at the Rump concerning the concentration of political power. It also mandated triennial, single house parliaments of four hundred members. Critically, the constitution granted the Lord Protector a final veto, thus placing the "negative voice" of the King in the Protectorate's un-elected executive. The Protector's prerogatives included selecting Council of State members, local magistrates, and the court of triers. Many Independents hoped that the work of the triers would result in a reformed, established national church. The Lord Protector assumed other powers that violated fundamental aspects of the ancient constitution, including the privilege to tax without consent of Parliament. Important in light of the new ruling class' expansionist ambitions, the Instrument of Government placed little if any constitutional breaks on the Council of State's power to conduct foreign policy. Cromwell and his lieutenants could now exercise more control over foreign affairs, in terms of revenue and war-making power, than the King formerly possessed.⁸⁶

With radical expectations crushed again by the establishment of the Protectorate and the seeming return to arbitrary forms of government, sectarians and former Levellers responded with a blitz of publications. In meetings held at All Hallows Church and

⁸⁶ Barnard, *English Republic*, 35-38; Hutton, *British Republic*, 62-70; Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate*, 364-378.

London House, the Fifth Monarchist group formed to organize the brewing disaffection.⁸⁷

General Harrison, preachers John Rogers, John Simpson, and Christopher Feake, along with ex- New Englanders such as Hanserd Knollys, Thomas Venner, Wentworth Day, and John Clarke began holding Fifth Monarchist meetings at All Hallows and Blackfriars Churches, as well as in the Coleman Street conventicles. More of a loosely organized political pressure group than a religious sect, but certainly not as ephemeral as the Ranters, the Fifth Monarchists associated the advent of “free state” or republican government with advancing Christ’s millennial kingdom on earth. The movement drew spiritists of all descriptions into its ranks, mobilizing the pre-existing Coleman Street sectarian network while reaching out to other meetings in Shoreditch, Stepney, Whitechapel, Wapping, in the city’s east end, as well as Southwark across the Thames.⁸⁸

Although they shared millennial expectations and antinomian enthusiasm, Fifth Monarchists did not subscribe to a uniform set of religious doctrines. Some like Wentworth Day believed in universal salvation and became known as General Baptists. Others like Hanserd Knollys who were called Particular Baptists believed in predestination, although both Knollys and Day subscribed to adult baptism. John Goodwin, who sometimes moved in these circles, believed in universal salvation but rejected adult baptism. Others like John Clarke remained undecided about the knowledge of who was and was not saved and tried above all else to avoid doctrinal rigidity, a fear

⁸⁷ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 99-102. The term “Fifth Monarchist” arose from this republican group’s decided millenarian expectations that they lived in the apocalyptic age described in Isaiah, Daniel, and Revelation. Seeing themselves as God’s saving remnant, they believed they were called to remove all “antichristian instruments and oppressions” standing in opposition to the establishment of Christ’s law on earth. Overturning the Stuart Dynasty, and the new freedoms made possible by the English Republic thus represented progress in sacred time toward the “Fifth Monarchy,” Christ’s kingdom on earth that would replace the four previous antichristian monarchies of the Medes, Persians, Greeks and Romans.

⁸⁸ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 76-99.

that motivated his friend Roger Williams, a millenarian but not a Fifth Monarchist, to embrace the elusive tenets of “Seekerism.” Henry Vane’s religiosity most closely resembled Quakerism, which Baptists and non-Baptists both condemned theologically (although not politically). But the millennialism that infused Vane’s writings in 1655 and 1656 showed that Fifth Monarchism colored his religious as well as his political ideas.⁸⁹

In this light, some skepticism is in order regarding the traditional view that the Fifth Monarchy movement and those on its Baptist and Quaker fringes were “religious fanatics.” Describing how the godly could make common cause in the Fifth Monarchist program, the preacher John Rogers proclaimed the movement was of “such a latitude as takes in all saints, all such as are sanctified in Christ Jesus, without respect of what form or judgment he is.”⁹⁰ For the purposes of politically organizing such a wide array of determined spiritists, this stress on toleration seems quite practical as well as ideologically consistent. The public spiritedness of the sects, in overcoming religious differences for the common good, helped avoid self-interested, doctrinally-driven factionalism. Trans-Atlantic saints on Coleman Street believed that this had corrupted the godly project in America, a corruption that had resulted in their own persecution. As one radical wrote towards the end of the Interregnum,

Errors and differences in men’s understandings are from natural, unavoidable infirmity ... Therefore, let us be unanimous in seeking an establishment of equal freedom and security to the whole people; and of the best means of instructing the

⁸⁹ Richard Greaves, “Wentworth Day,” in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 1: 217; Richard Greaves, “Hanserd Knollys,” in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 2: 161; John Goodwin, *Redemption Redeemed* (London, 1651); James, *John Clarke*, 40-41; David Parnham, *Sir Henry Vane, Theologian: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Religious and Political Discourse* (Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), *passim*.

⁹⁰ *The Faithful Narrative of the Late Testimony and Demand made to Oliver Cromwell...on the behalf of the Lord’s Prisoners* (London, 1655), 37.

whole people in the spirit of love and meekness; and then true religion will increase and flourish.⁹¹

John Clarke, Hanserd Knollys, and Henry Jessey organized different sects under the Fifth Monarchist banner through the *Declaration of Several Gathered Churches* (1654), a petition that received hundreds of signatures including William Righton's, formerly of Bermuda. In signing *The Declaration*, the saints pledged to keep in close correspondence to advance the cause of godly reform, which in political terms meant opposing the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. Weekly meetings for Fifth Monarchists were held at Blackfriars, St. Thomas Apostle, and the Coleman Street meetinghouses that had hosted sectarian gatherings since the late 1630s. In the tradition of Samuel How, Wentworth Day and Thomas Venner quickly earned notoriety as popular mechanick preachers for their vitriolic, tub-thumping harangues against the Protectorate.

John Clarke's former classmate at Brasenose College and fellow Hutchinsonian, William Aspinwall, became one of the Fifth Monarchists' most prolific writers during this period.⁹² Aspinwall's success as a pamphleteer owed in part to his close association with Coleman Street bookseller Livewell Chapman, a member of Venner's congregation. Although Aspinwall disparaged Chapman's Baptist leanings in *A Discourse on the Principle Points Touching Baptism*, both saints found common cause in Aspinwall's lengthy response to the establishment of the Protectorate, *A Premonition of Sad Sundry Calumnies*, which held Cromwell responsible for England's return to autocratic

⁹¹ *The Leveller* (London, 1659), 548.

⁹² James, *John Clarke*, 3; Henry Oswald Aspinwall, *The Aspinwall and Aspinwall Families of Lancashire Ad 1189-1923* (Exeter: Wm Pollard and Co., 1923), 9-14; Dailey, "Root and Branch," 148.

government.⁹³ The fiery tone of Aspinwall's pamphlet resembled the petition he framed against the Bay Colony Court during the Antinomian Controversy. In his vitriolic screed, he prophesized that those who "instituted ordinances of their own instead of God's law" would fall to the leveling sword of Christ, who would slay all supporters of governments that placed men in unnatural and antichristian subjection to one another. "None of them shall escape it as they have all been sharers in the sin, and have broken the everlasting covenant!" thundered Aspinwall.⁹⁴ In Interregnum England, much as he had done through his petition for Wheelwright in Boston, Aspinwall provided a popular, godly political movement with prophetic injunctions concerning the justice of resisting arbitrary government.

These protests against the Protectorate were also related to Cromwell's foreign policy concerning with the United Provinces. During the Barebone's Parliament, many of the saints led by Harrison actively opposed negotiations with the enemy. Bernard Capp has argued that the preponderance of small producers, especially cloth workers within the growing Fifth Monarchy movement, galvanized radicals against the Netherlands. They saw the war as a means to thwart the commercial ambitions of the Dutch while securing England's dominance in the textile trade. Feake blasted Cromwell, who loathed the war, and cautioned him that "God's vengeance would follow a heathenish peace." As negotiations continued in November of 1653, Feake called Cromwell a "man of sin, the old dragon," and sent out circular letters to like-minded

⁹³ William Aspinwall, *A Discourse on the Principle Points Touching Baptism* (London, 1652). Chapman nonetheless published the work.

⁹⁴ Aspinwall, *A Premonition of Sad, Sundry Calamities Yet to Come* (London, 1654), 7.

churches urging them to agitate against a lenient settlement with the Dutch.⁹⁵ Venner's congregation was especially adamant, arguing in republican terms that the war was for "the public good," and expected, after the Dutch had been decisively defeated, to join with them in an international Protestant-republican crusade against international Catholicism. Feake echoed these sentiments. "We shall at last join together" with the Dutch "and do such work as was never done in the world."⁹⁶

The Treaty of Westminster (January 1654) that concluded the war in England's favor did not deliver this union, a sore disappointment to the war's republican supporters. The small producers within the sects and their powerful allies like Thomas Harrison were enraged that the treaty did not secure English trading rights in the Baltic and the East and West Indies. But as Stephen Pincus points out, "that the peace did not provide England with the wealth of the Indies was only because that was not the aim of the war."⁹⁷ This might have been true for Rump MPs like Oliver St. John who conducted the failed negotiations, but Pincus' conclusion ignores the fact that critical support for the war came from another class of men and women, the godly tradesmen and small producers of England, who would form an important core of radical republican opposition to the Protectorate. Although the Dutch recognized the legitimacy of the Protectorate and promised to cease aiding Royalists across the British Isles, the millennial expectations of a republican union against Catholic Spain were dashed by the war's anticlimactic conclusion. Cromwell, who had come to see the war as a Jesuit conspiracy among Orange diplomats, now appeared to the radicals as having sold out practical Christian

⁹⁵ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 72; J.E. Farnell, "The Navigation Act of 1651, the First Dutch War, and the London Community," *Economic History Review* 16 (1963-1964), 450-452.

⁹⁶ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 152-154.

⁹⁷ Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism*, 184.

reforms at home while abandoning a Protestant-republican crusade that would effect a worldwide reformation.⁹⁸

With the conclusion of the Dutch War, Cromwell and the Council of State set out to broaden England's imperial horizons. The young republic had already accomplished much on this front. By 1654, with the reduction of the Royalist threat in Ireland and Scotland, the Republic proclaimed a constitutional union between the four nations of the British Isles. The English Revolution's impact on the government's relationship with its New World territories was just as far-reaching, establishing, at least through legislation, Parliament's supreme sovereignty in the colonies.⁹⁹

While Charles had claimed dominion over the colonies, his increasing domestic difficulties blunted the effectiveness of this initiative. Laud tried to intervene, and even oversaw a "Plantation Council" that threatened to revoke Massachusetts' charter in 1638.¹⁰⁰ When the Civil War broke out, Parliament, under the leadership of the Earl of Warwick, struggled to exert its authority over the colonies. By 1650, the Rump Parliament had turned its attention westward when Virginia, Maryland, Barbados, St. Kitts, and Antigua proclaimed Charles II. The Plantation Act of 1650 reasserted imperial dominion in America and the West Indies, with Parliamentary replacing monarchical authority. But this act included more than just transferring colonial allegiance from King to Parliament; it called for Parliament's wholesale legislative supremacy in the colonies, an active, comprehensive assertion of sovereignty that Charles had not pursued through

⁹⁸ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 151-155; Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism*, 180-191; For the book that prompted Cromwell's Jesuit conspiracy theory, see Tommaso Campanella, *A Discourse Touching the Spanish Monarchy* (London, 1660).

⁹⁹ Robert M. Bliss, *Revolution and Empire: English Politics and the American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 17-72.

¹⁰⁰ Bliss, *Revolution and Empire*, 19, 27.

his royal prerogative. With the Act of 1650, Parliament claimed the right to determine and approve all colonial charters, trade, and religious practice, a truly imperial overture.¹⁰¹

Westminster strengthened this policy through the Navigation Acts of 1651, which outlawed European commercial competition in the New England, Chesapeake, and Caribbean colonies. The Rump thus claimed an imperial monopoly in the trade of Chesapeake tobacco, Barbados sugar, New England's naval stores, and its timber, fish, molasses, and rum. The law then circumscribed the colonies as a captive, export market for English textiles and manufactured goods. Steven Pincus has observed that the Rump intended to use the act to force Holland to come to the negotiating table to form a republican union. Although this is certainly true, this was not the sole or even most important purpose of the act. Parliament hoped most explicitly that the new imperial legislation would enable England to establish the economic power necessary to build an empire that could compete with and perhaps gain dominance over its rivals in the emerging European state system.¹⁰²

By 1654, as David Armitage has written, England had arrived at an "imperial moment" testing whether commonwealth ideals could withstand the exigencies of modern state-building.¹⁰³ Drawing heavily on classical and Renaissance political

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 60-64; Firth and Rait, eds., *Acts and Ordinances*, 2: 425-429; Robert Bliss, *Revolution and Empire: English Politics and the American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: University of Manchester Press, 1990); Carla Gardina Pestana, *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution, 1640-1661* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 86-122.

¹⁰² Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 145-147; Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism*, 40-50; Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 258; Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 625.

¹⁰³ David Armitage, "The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Languages of Empire," *Historical Journal* 35 (1992), 532-533; "Empire and Liberty: A Republican Dilemma," in Skinner and van Gelderen, eds,

philosophy, and casting a suspicious eye on the Dutch, French, and Spanish, many of the Protectorate's supporters believed that the commonwealth's political and economic security depended upon its successful transition from a self-contained republic to an overseas empire. According to Blair Worden, English republicans supported the 'good wars' against Ireland, Scotland, and Holland, which in their view encompassed the republican concept of martial courage exercised on behalf of a "commonwealth of increase" that exported liberty and godliness across the world.¹⁰⁴ In many ways, Professor Worden offers a sound interpretation, especially in relation to the Scottish and Dutch War. But in the case of Ireland, he defines "republican" support exclusively through the eyes of the Rump Parliament and its supporters in the army high command. As we have seen, other republicans within the sects and the army opposed the war due to its alleged "mercenary principles."

This tension between virtue and imperial wars in the thinking of the commonwealth's architects raised a classical question: Would the move toward empire pervert the very principles of justice upon which the republic had been founded? Ancient Rome offered the best example of the inherent tension between sustaining virtue in a republic and imperial expansion. Readers of Cicero and Machiavelli knew that commonwealths became corrupted when their ruling-classes waged self-interested wars of conquest at the expense of the public good, "enslaving the people to their own lusts." The resulting domestic unrest that this bred ushered in the tyrannical rule of emperors who destroyed republican institutions through debilitating wars conducted in the name of

Republicanism – A Shared European Heritage: The Values of Republicanism in Early Modern Europe, 29-46.

¹⁰⁴ Worden, "Beginnings of English Republicanism," in Wooton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society*, 48, 53.

imperial glory. Instead of following principles of republican justice by equitably distributing the spoils of a just war, imperial tyrants aggrandized their own power and wealth at the expense of the people's blood and treasure.¹⁰⁵

Marchmont Nedham, a brilliant thinker and double-dealing propagandist who had served both King and Parliament, tried to reconcile this tension in his 1652 translation of John Selden's *Mare Clausum* (1618).¹⁰⁶ Nedham published this tract to justify the Dutch War, not an easy feat as it pitted sister republics against one another. In Machiavellian fashion he argued that the fulfillment of republican virtue, although impossible to sustain permanently, depended upon cultivating the people's martial spirit that would enable the state, through conquest, to expand its dominion. The route to power and glory, then, lay in the state's perpetual mobilization for war to create a "commonwealth of expansion."¹⁰⁷ The timing of Nedham's tract aligned classical theory with harsh economic reality; ten years of civil war had devastated agriculture, manufacture, and domestic trade, while the Dutch had captured England's share of the woolen market in Europe and the Mediterranean. Paying the largest standing army in English history exhausted the commonwealth's treasury and subsequent tax increases and efforts to collect outstanding taxes had made the regime more unpopular than the King's before the Civil War. Meanwhile, Spain's "universal monarchy" continued to threaten the status of godly religion and republican liberty in its continental and New World dominions. Spreading

¹⁰⁵ Maurizio Viroli, "Machieveli and the Republican Idea of Politics," in Gisella Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli, eds., *Machieavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 158-160; Michael Mallet, "The Theory and Practice of Warfare in Machiavelli's Republic," in *ibid.*, 173-180.

¹⁰⁶ Armitage, "Languages of Empire," 532. Nedham re-titled the work, *Of the Dominion or Ownership of the Sea*.

¹⁰⁷ *Mercurius Politicus*, 22 January 1652, 1352; *Mercurius Politicus*, 13 May 1652, 1586; Worden, "Beginnings of English Republicanism," in Wooton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society*, 70-74.

Protestantism, growing England's wealth, the power of its government, and the "glory" of the state, as Nedham, Cromwell, and the members of the Council of State came to recognize, lay in military conquest, naval power, and commercial expansion abroad.¹⁰⁸ Undertaken for godly and virtuous reasons, then, imperial expansion could therefore strengthen rather than weaken liberty at home and hasten the millennium by advancing the reformation and the reign of the saints on earth. The sacred cause, in its millennial moment, enabled godly republicans to escape the fortunes of the temporal world and thus the moral degeneration and subsequent impotence of previous republics.

In 1654, victory over the Dutch gave the Protector and the Council of State confidence that the hand of God would continue to guide the nation as it attempted to smite its most formidable rival, Catholic Spain, whom the naval administrator Thomas Scot warned would soon make its realm "the whole Empire of Christendom."¹⁰⁹ With the expanded powers given him by the Instrument of Government Act, the Lord Protector launched his first major foreign policy initiative in December 1654, a campaign that consisted of a two-pronged attack against the Spanish. In the Mediterranean, the English would singe the Spaniard's beard with a fleet commanded by Admiral Blake, while another expedition would thwart the Catholic power in its Caribbean stronghold.

Scholars have conducted a binary debate over Cromwell's motivations in the Caribbean expedition, with some holding that it represented a crusade to insure the Protestant interest against the power of Catholic Spain, with others arguing that the main idea lay in pillaging Spain's Caribbean riches, a sort of throw-back to the "sea-dog"

¹⁰⁸ David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 60-125; Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 145-147.

¹⁰⁹ Armitage, *Language of Empire*, 535; Worden, "Providence and Politics in Cromwellian England," 55-99; Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism*, 186; Thomas Scot, *The Spainards Cruelty and Treachery to the English in the Time of Peace and War, Discovered* (London, 1656), 54.

adventurism of the Elizabethan Era.¹¹⁰ These debates reflect a false dichotomy and neglect the colonial aspirations of the Lord Protector. It is impossible to separate gain from godliness within the foreign policy decision-making criteria employed by any European nation, Protestant or Catholic, during the seventeenth century. Such attempts to disengage “Protestant crusades” from economic expansion elevate language into a consuming worldview that shades material ambitions from the light of day. But both Protestant and economic expansionism, even the sea-dog variety, mutually sustained the colonial vision that marked Cromwell’s westward ambitions, a vision that saw American colonies as sources of wealth and outposts of the Reformation.¹¹¹ Since 1630 with the foundation of the Providence Island colony off the coast of Nicaragua, godly aristocrats such as the Earl of Warwick and Lord Saye and Sele had valued the Caribbean over New England as a more strategic and economically lucrative site for colonial development.¹¹² As religious conflict and economic decline wracked New England in the early 1640s, a movement for removal to the West Indies arose in the Bay Colony itself, with Thomas Venner acting as one of its leading advocates.¹¹³ Cromwell believed that England’s penetration of the West Indies would advance the Reformation, deplete Spanish wealth

¹¹⁰ See, for instance, Stephen Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism*, 196-191; Maurice Ashley, *Financial and Commercial Policy under the Cromwellian Protectorate* (London, 1934); Robert Thomas Fallon, “Cromwell and the Western Design,” in Rajan and Sauer, eds., *Milton and the Imperial Vision*, 133-154; Frank Strong, “The Causes of Cromwell’s West Indian Expedition,” *American Historical Review* 4 (1899); John F. Battick, “A New Interpretation of Cromwell’s Western Design,” *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*, 34 (1972); Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell, The Lord Protector* (New York, 1974), 522; Charles Korr, *Cromwell and the New Model Foreign Policy Toward France, 1649-1658* (Berkeley, 1975), 115, 145.

¹¹¹ Neville Williams, *The Sea Dogs: Privateers, Plunder, and Piracy in the Elizabethan Age* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1975); Harry Kelsey, *John Hawkins: Queen Elizabeth’s Slave Trader* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

¹¹² Kupperman, “Errand into the West Indies,” 84-88.

¹¹³ Charles Banks, “Thomas Venner: The Boston Wine-Cooper and Fifth Monarchy Man,” *NEHGR* 47 (1893), 437-444; Felt, *Annals of Salem*, 2: 577.

and power, empower England's colonial and commercial expansion, and in the end, ensure imperial domination over its Spanish, French, and Dutch rivals.

It would be hard to exaggerate the deep religious convictions that underlay Cromwell's ambitions in the Caribbean; his faith in England's providential greatness expanded with his own political power, and both had reached their zenith in 1654. The past five years bore witness to the abolition of monarchy, the execution of Charles I, the conquest of Ireland (1649), the defeat of the final Royalist challenge at Worcester (1651), victory over the Dutch, and finally, Cromwell's installation as Lord Protector (1654). When the general sought prophetic guidance from New England divine John Cotton, the minister explained through Biblical metaphors that taking Spanish possessions in the Caribbean would work toward the "drying up of Euphrates" and the toppling of the Catholic Babylon.¹¹⁴ Back in England, Roger Williams noted Cromwell's enthusiastic reception of Cotton's interpretation and the excitement that the projected design produced among Cromwell's councilors.¹¹⁵ The Protector spoke of how the Lord would bless England's expansion, "because we think God has not brought us hither where we are but to consider the work that we may do in the world as well as at home."¹¹⁶ Having abandoned England under Charles I, the exiles struggled in the 1630s to make New England a harbinger of the Reformation; now with victory in the Civil War, it was clear that God had returned to England. Now he would venture westward again to defeat the Spanish Anti-christ in one its strongest and most prosperous redoubts. Wanting prophetic guidance from the godly in New England, Cromwell received and believed the message that England's going out again into the New World provided the nation with a golden

¹¹⁴ Kupperman, "Errand into the West Indies," 92.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, 92, 95.

¹¹⁶ Armitage, "Languages of Empire," 536; Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 207

opportunity to fulfill its obligation of world-wide reformation. Meeting objections to the plan in the Council of State, Cromwell expressed his faith that providence would bless the expedition.¹¹⁷ Looking out on the fragmentation of the republican fold, Cromwell also gambled that the imperial glory of conquering the “common enemy” of Catholic Spain would outshine the divisions among the godly. Anticipating the design’s success, Cromwell was moved to say in council that “the work is like to be more acceptable to the people of all sorts and the Parliament than any can be.”¹¹⁸ The Lord Protector would use imperial conquest against Spain in the same way that he had in Ireland in 1649 to galvanize political support for the government. But in 1654, he would be afforded greater control of the initiative, without having to contend with Henry Vane and the Rump Parliament

Plans for the Caribbean conquest entailed far more than just harassing Spanish garrisons and galleons in the West Indies. They encompassed a providentially-ordained imperial project, bolstered by the previous conquests of Ireland and Scotland, that sought to expand the godly republic’s dominion outside of the English nation.¹¹⁹ When Cromwell debated the projected invasion of the Caribbean in the Council of State, he made the establishment of empire the centerpiece of his case.

That being...we have command of the Spaniard’s fleet, that he can neither come nor go nor come, and so he hath absolutely lost benefit of the Indies. Then we have the advantage of Hispaniola (a country beyond compare as they describe it) for the transplanting as much of our people from New England, Virginia, the Barbadoes, the Summer Islands, or from Europe, as we see requisite...as our

¹¹⁷ Worden, “Providence and Politics,” 92-99.

¹¹⁸ Firth, ed., Appendix B, *Clarke Papers*, 3: 205

¹¹⁹ Armitage, “Languages of Empire,” 531-555; Fallon, “Cromwell and the Western Design,” 133-154; Kupperman, “Errand into the West Indies,” 70-99; Bliss, *Revolution and Empire*, 64.

settlement at home, Scotland being not in our view to be settled without a transplantation of 8 or 10000 bodies of men every year.¹²⁰

Planting Hispaniola with godly migrants as well as with servants (or slaves) from the conquered Celtic fringe would also help secure Barbados from Royalist and Spanish incursions, thus safeguarding possessions already in the common weal. To expand colonial holdings, Jamaica, Cuba, and Suriname would be taken if possible, and for a quick infusion of cash, gold-laden Spanish ships sailing from Peru offered splendid prey for the nation's mobile, sea-borne guardians, the republican navy.¹²¹ There were other attractive features of this plan, as Cromwell informed the design's most powerful opponent, General Lambert. "It was told us that the design would cost little more than the laying by of ship, and that with hope of great profit."¹²² Profit would come first through Spanish loot, and thereafter through gold, silver, and colonial cash crops, thus bringing to life the commercial empire envisioned in the Navigation Act.¹²³

Cromwell divulged his colonial ambitions in a letter to John Winthrop, Jr. that urged New Englanders to relocate to the West Indies. Roger Williams noted from London in 1655 that

the supply of gold (to take of taxes), and the provision of a warmer Diverticulum and Receptaculum then New England is, will make a footing into those parts for

¹²⁰ Firth, ed., Appendix B, *Clarke Papers*, 3: 203-206. Karen Orhdahl Kupperman argues that colonial interests heavily influenced the policy-making behind the Western Design, colonial interests that Puritans had first pursued in the West Indies with the foundation of the Providence Island colony off the coast of Nicaragua in 1630. See her "Errand into the West Indies," 88.

¹²¹ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, 87.

¹²² Firth, ed., Appendix B, *Clarke Papers*, 3: 206-208.

¹²³ Korr, *Cromwell and New Model Foreign Policy*, 114-116. Besides accepting the advice that the expedition would pay for itself, Cromwell saw it as a way to employ the large fleet of one hundred and sixty ships that lay idle after the Dutch War. In February 1655, in the first military action of the Western Design, Admiral Penn confiscated eighty Dutch ships in Barbados "that traded there contrary to the late Parliament," thereby enforcing the Navigation Act of 1651 almost immediately upon his arrival in the Caribbean. Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3:38.

removal from his Highness, who looks on N.E. only with an eye of pity, as poor, cold and useless.¹²⁴

From this evidence, it seems that the architects of the Western Design planned to refocus colonization efforts from New England to the Caribbean in order to secure a base of strong supporters in the heart of their burgeoning imperial system.

The colonial vision underlying the project emerges more clearly with a close inspection of the personnel that Cromwell selected to plan and execute the expedition. Commissioners, generals, and admirals were appointed for the affair, drawn largely from a pool of soldiers, merchants, and politicians close to Cromwell. Besides counting on their personal loyalty, the Lord Protector drew upon the accumulated experience of these men in the mutually sustaining ventures of conquest and colonization. General Robert Venables' credentials for leading the expedition were impeccable; during his service in Ireland from 1649-1654, he led the storming of Drogheda and participated enthusiastically in the massacre of its civilian population, "other officers refusing the employment." The massacre was meant to

strike terror in the other towns, and the rest of the forces that held for the King. All that were found in arms were put to the sword...yet the rage of the soldiers was so great, that many of the inhabitants were slain in the heat of the fight, without respect to either age, sex or condition.¹²⁵

Terror, as the contemporary account tells us and as we saw earlier in New England, figured critically in the initial stage of colonial expropriation. For his loyal services, Cromwell awarded Venables with the command of the Ulster plantation, where he gained valuable experience as a colonial officer in two ways. First, he directed the suppression

¹²⁴ Kupperman, "Errand into the Indies," 95; Williams to John Winthrop, Jr., Feb. 15, 1654 (old calendar), *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, 4th Series, 6: 291.

¹²⁵ Sir Richard Baker, *A Chronicle of the Kings of England* (London, 1696), 592-3.

of Irish guerrilla partisans, or “Tories,” in missions that ended either with the summary execution or enslavement of Catholics suspected of resistance. Secondly, in perhaps his most important responsibility as a colonial administrator in Ireland, Venables directed the transplantation of hundreds of thousands Catholics to the bleak, stony outland of Connaught. Venables also oversaw the legal transfer of Catholic property to London speculators.¹²⁶

Edward Winslow, an apologist for the Wegganusset Indian massacres in New England, three-time governor of Plymouth Plantation, and the Bay Colony’s business agent in London, made another likely candidate. New England was a place, wrote Winslow, where “religion and profit jump together,” and he knew from his own colonial experience that the success of both depended upon the subjugation of native societies.¹²⁷ Winslow could provide the needed administrative and propaganda skills to ensure the viability and godly image of the project.¹²⁸ After returning from Old England in 1646 to defend New England’s intolerance of heterodoxy from the scorching condemnations of the antinomian Samuel Gorton, Winslow ingratiated himself with Cromwell when he emerged as a fierce critic of the Levellers.¹²⁹ Before his appointment as Western Design commissioner, he earned a handsome salary as a Protectorate official administering

¹²⁶ Robert Venables, *The Narrative of General Venables*, C.H. Firth, ed., (London: Royal Historical Society, 1902), vii, xxviii, 2. For the expedition, Venables picked Colonel Edward D’Oyley to command a regiment due to his experience in the conquest of Ireland. D’Oyley went on to become Governor of Jamaica from 1655-1660. In the Carribean, Venables relied heavily on the advice of Colonel Holdept, who before sailing with the fleet from Portsmouth, had been the English Governor of Surinam and an “experienced planter” with an extensive knowledge of the Spanish colonies, the tropical climate, how to grow cash crops and the science of disciplining slave labor. Hated by the men for his “cruelty,” Holdept was eventually cashiered for embezzlement.

¹²⁷ Ziff, *Puritanism in America*, 48; Edward Winslow, *Good News from New England* (London, 1642), 3.

¹²⁸ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 187.

¹²⁹ Edward Winslow, *The Danger of Tolerating Levelers in a Civil State* (London, 1648); Samuel Gorton, *Hypocrisie Unmasked: A True Relation of the Proceedings of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Against Samuel Gorton of Rhode Island* (London, 1646) reprinted by The Club for Colonial Reprints, ed., Howard Millar Chapin (Providence, 1916). See the introduction for biographical information on Winslow.

London's horrid debtor prisons, although he received a raise with the 1000 he was promised for his Caribbean post.¹³⁰ The two positions were not unrelated, as thousands of inmates were impressed from England's debtor prisons to serve in the expedition. But the greatest Leveller of them all would come to call on Winslow in the Caribbean. Like hundreds of the men that he had imprisoned and impressed, Winslow would die of fever in Jamaica in the spring of 1655.¹³¹

In planning the Western Design, Cromwell listened intently to the advice of other Americans besides Winslow, particularly three men formerly of the West Indies, Martin Noell, Thomas Gage, and Thomas Povey.¹³² Noell, who gained Cromwell's ear with lavish descriptions of the riches to be had in the West Indies, had started out in 1638 as a small tobacco planter in the Barbados, graduated to sugar production, and multiplied his wealth through the Atlantic slave trade, later becoming a charter member of the Royal African Company.¹³³ In 1650, with his fortune made, he returned to London where he gained a seat on the Board of Trade.¹³⁴ From this post, Noell commandeered control of the salt, glass, wire, copper and alum excise. Growing even wealthier from his liberal share of the revenue, he rose to prominence as Cromwell's "right hand financier." After skimming the excise, Noell found that he could double his profits by using these proceeds to fund government loans. In 1655, in the midst of the Western Design, with the help of

¹³⁰ Venables, *Narrative*, x. In this capacity, Winslow's official job description included "the compounding of delinquents" through overseeing their detention in debtor prisons like the Wood Street and Poultry Compters attacked by Venner's rebels in 1661.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, Appendix D, 136.

¹³² Sean O'Callaghan identifies Noell and Gage as key figures in the planning of the project. See his *To Hell or Barbados: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ireland* (Channel Islands: Brandon, 2000), 134.

¹³³ Bodleian Library, Carte Ms 74 fol. 43; O'Callaghan, *Hell or Barbados*, 131.

¹³⁴ Noell appears on a list of instructions sent in August 1654 to Penn, Venables, and other officers with orders to outfit the fleet, appoint staff, and procure supplies. See Venables, *Narrative*, Appendix A, 107. Noell's name shows up frequently as a merchant contractor in the *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series* for the entire period of the Republic, as well as in the *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, 1574-1660*.

Thomas Povey, one of the expedition's outfitters, Noell helped to re-organize this advisory group into the even more influential "Trade Committee" that advised Cromwell on commercial concerns in foreign policy. As England's leading excise man, Noell ruled a world of spectacular corruption, but, as Charles Wilson wrote, "one that endured due to the persistent demands of war finance...and perhaps the newly vested interests" of the members of a new ruling-class bent on building an Atlantic empire.¹³⁵

In 1648, Thomas Gage, a former Catholic priest turned merchant, wrote *The English-American: A New Survey of the West Indies*. In the book, Gage described Spanish aggression against English colonies in the West Indies and pointed out Spanish naval and military weaknesses, implying that Cuba and Hispaniola could be taken with little expense. He made much of Spain's lucrative Caribbean trade, which included "sugar, Spanish tobacco, chocolate, hides, several sorts of wood such as Lignum vitae, brazil, or such sorts" as well as indigo, wine, oil, barley, cattle, hogs, and horses.¹³⁶ In March 1654, Gage composed a position paper for Cromwell, justifying an attack on Spanish territory in the West Indies as a measure of self-defense for England's own expansionist ambitions. In the treatise, Gage combined imperial ambition with evangelical zeal by claiming that the Indians, long suffering the oppression of the "lazy, sinful" Spanish, "longeth to see the light of the gospel run more and more forwards till it come to settle in the West."¹³⁷

Others on the commission echoed these sentiments, charging that the "King of Spain" had used the "Popish and cruel Inquisition" to hold Indians in "miserable

¹³⁵ Charles Wilson, *England's Apprenticeship, 1603-1763* (New York, 1984), 58, 130-132. Noell, despite his Cromwellian associations, became such a powerful financial figure in London that King Charles II knighted him in 1662. See Pepys, *Diary*, 284.

¹³⁶ Venables, *Narrative*, Appendix D, 138.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 138.

thralldome and bondage, both spiritual and civil.” After describing the economic boon of the conquest in great detail, the commissioners piously explained that the real purpose of the mission consisted of “bringing in the light of the gospel and true religion” to natives held back from godliness by the long arms of their Spanish slave masters.¹³⁸ It has been alleged that John Milton was the author of a tract that proclaimed that the Western Design “avenge(d) the blood...of the poor Indians...so unjustly, so cruelly and so often shed by the Spaniards.” This made England’s cause in the Caribbean the cause of mankind, where “all great and extraordinary wrongs done to particular persons ought to be considered as in a manner done to all the rest of the human race.”¹³⁹ If Milton did indeed write these words, his tune would change from idealism to disillusion after the expedition returned to England.¹⁴⁰ Although little effort had been made to Christianize natives on English-held Barbados, Thomas Gage promised that the island would furnish ten thousand volunteers for the expedition so that Hispaniola’s Indians might enjoy the blessings of Protestantism. These armed missionaries would be paid off with conquered land for their evangelical devotion.¹⁴¹ Powerful figures like General Lambert argued in contrast that a Caribbean venture remained impracticable, costly to the government, and a

¹³⁸ Venables, *Narrative*, Appendix A, 109. For a more general discussion of how European nations justified their own imperial policies by claiming to defend native peoples from the abuses of other European nations, see Sharon Achinstein, “Imperial Dialectic, Milton and Conquered Peoples,” in Rajan and Sauer, eds., *Milton and the Imperial Vision*, 67-89.

¹³⁹ Hill, *English Bible*, 275; O’Callaghan, *Hell or Barbados*, 134; Fallon, *Cromwell and the Western Design*, 148-154; John Milton, *A Manifesto of the Lord Protector...Whereas is Shown the Reasonableness of the Cause of this Republic Against the Depredations of the Spaniards* (London, 1655).

¹⁴⁰ David Armitage, “John Milton: Poet Against Empire,” in David Armitage, Armand Himy, Quentin Skinner, eds., *Milton and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹⁴¹ Bodleian Library, Rawl Ms A 24 fol.11. Land on Jamaica was “divided among the regiments” in June, 1655. Venables, *Narrative*, Appendix D, 2: 140. However, the customary “plunder” allotted to English soldiers during the Civil War was disallowed in the Caribbean venture, for fear of destruction to property that might benefit a new English Caribbean regime. It was also feared that plunder would diminish discipline among the already unruly troops. The retraction of plunder, which had been held out as a promise to the men, did much to dampen the enthusiasm of the expedition’s rank-and-file. See Venables, *Narrative*, 13-17

risk to maritime commercial interests. But Cromwell, following Gage's lead and Noell's advice, found a profitable opportunity in the planned shipment of 10,000 Scots to the Caribbean as plantation workers. This worked towards a solution for both the colonial labor scarcity problem and the enclosure and agricultural improvement of Scotland by its new English owners.¹⁴² But before these dreams of empire could be realized, the design's most difficult task lay ahead: manning the fleet.

Exploring how the government accomplished this task is vital to understanding the process by which the first British Empire came into being. And without visiting the human experience of those who were swept up in the process, often against their will, the richness and complexity of republican politics is swept clean of those whose labor power and neglected political thought and organization gave it life in its original historic context. Indeed, such an approach should not be seen as a counterweight to the intellectual history of republicanism and empire, because delving into the material experience of those who were impressed as unfree labor can only help us understand the thinking behind the wave of radical republicanism that formed in response to the Western Design.

In this light, we will first explore how the Republic actually mobilized for war before moving on to an account of the Western Design itself. The Protectorate undertook the largest conscription drive since the Irish conquest of 1649 to make ready for the Caribbean expedition.¹⁴³ It is here that the Western Design intersected most directly with

¹⁴² Venables, *Narrative*, Appendix B, 203-206.

¹⁴³ The Dutch War (1652-54) had initially proved popular with many seamen, sectarians, and republican radicals, who saw the interests of small producers in the woolen industry wrapped up in the defeat of the Dutch, whose support of the Royalist cause during the Civil War incurred the hostility of many English. Thus, manning the fleet for the Dutch War did not cause the type of radical backlash that would plague the Western Design. A first hand account of Western Design impressments gives us a sense of both its scale

the network of trans-Atlantic radicals meeting on Coleman Street, most particularly the winecooper Thomas Venner, who lived in the neighborhood of Katherine's Stairs, the traditional rendezvous point of London's press gangs. Working nearby in the Tower of London, Venner would have helped to outfit the Caribbean fleet with barrels for beer, water, brandy and other supplies. While making barrels for the expedition, he would have seen pressed men being marched down Tower Hill towards ships waiting to take them to the fleet. As we will see in the next chapter, Venner and thousands of other radical republicans would confront, in the press gang, the outward bondage of what they regarded as literal slavery.¹⁴⁴

Bernard Capp's research has shown that the naval manpower impressed for the Western Design tripled the size of the British fleet, from 10,024 in 1652 to approximately 30,000 in 1654. Thus, as we will see, able-bodied seamen would join Celtic rebels, English convicts, and enslaved Africans and Indians in the spectrum of unfree labor that the republican ruling-class deployed to forward its project of colonial expansion.¹⁴⁵ In employing impressments on such a massive scale, the government made an enemy of the nation's seamen, when in 1642 at the outset of the Civil War, many had seen their own freedom wrapped up in the war against the King.¹⁴⁶ The precedent had been set early in the life of the Republic; in contrast to the radical proposal to abolish impressment in the *Agreements of the People*, we have seen how the Rump Parliament conscripted soldiers

and unpopularity. The captain of the *Hope* later complained that so many men had already been impressed, or were in hiding from the press gangs in the summer of 1654 that manning the fleet had depleted the ranks of merchant ships, to the "great interruption and vexation of trade."

¹⁴⁴ Christopher Lloyd, *The British Seaman, 1200-1860: A Social Survey* (London, 1968), 127-29.

¹⁴⁵ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, Introduction. By 1655, at the height of the Caribbean expedition, the navy contained over 40,000 seamen. This increase in manpower of course includes those impressed for the Dutch War of 1652-54.

¹⁴⁶ Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 110. Also see *The Humble Petition of the Mariners and Sea-Men, Inhabitants, in, and about the Ports of London and the River of Thames* (London, 1642). This petition in support of the parliamentary cause raised thousands of seamen's subscriptions.

for the Irish conquest. Later, resisting the press and other forms of “mutiny” were made capital offenses.¹⁴⁷ Within the context of this republican debate over the justice and necessity of forced military and naval service, General Venables launched his impressment campaign. Cromwell left the operation of the press gangs entirely to Venables’ own discretion, and wisely so with the experience that the general must have gained in the conquest of Ireland.¹⁴⁸ England’s seamen, however, would prove formidable foes of the enterprise.

Seamen had always loathed the press, but the Western Design’s grand scale of impressment coupled with the Caribbean’s reputation for deadly disease made the expedition’s prowling press gangs especially menacing to Jack Tars on liberty. Although details of the expedition had been kept secret to keep seamen from fleeing, word soon spread of the fleet’s tropical assignment.¹⁴⁹ Edward Coxere hid from the press gang with his brothers, but they were out in such force that Cox was forced to abandon his quarters after months of seclusion, having “become a prisoner in his own house.”¹⁵⁰ Luke Harbottle, another mariner, overpowered the press gang that captured him, but the captain of this ship later ensnared him on the docks of London.¹⁵¹ In Dartmouth, sailors banded

¹⁴⁷ The conditions of service worsened the plight of the seaman during the Interregnum. Although pay was raised in 1652, it was cut again in 1655, the year of the Western Design. The wage cut put seamen below the level of poorly paid farm laborers. Their next raise would come over a hundred years later. See Capp, *Cromwell’s Navy*, 58, 258-59. Contrary to its status as a “republican” navy, life on the English fleet mirrored anything but popular sovereignty; captains had absolute power, and any infractions would meet with horrific punishments, including flogging, time in the bilboes, or being dragged under the keel of the ship from yard arm to yard arm. The philosophers of the maritime state, however, considered these forms of labor discipline “seasonable and moderate.” See, for instance, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson Ms A 192 fol.341, *The Necessitie for Maintenance of the Shipping of the Kingdom*.

¹⁴⁸ Venables, *Narrative*, Appendix A, 111.

¹⁴⁹ Armitage, “Languages of Empire,” 539.

¹⁵⁰ Edward Coxere, *Adventures by Sea of Edward Coxere*, H.W. Meyerstein, ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 36. I owe this reference to Denver Brunsmen of Wayne State University, whose work on impressment has aided this project in many, invaluable ways.

¹⁵¹ Capp, *Cromwell’s Navy*, 262; Bodleian Library, Rawl MS A 187 fos.445-446.

together in large groups to intimidate constables charged with issuing orders for impressments. Sometimes sailors could count on the protection of sympathetic constables and magistrates. In Deal, Ipswich, Southwold, and the Channel Islands, local law officials delayed press gangs long enough so that men could escape into the interior to pose as farm workers. One Justice of the Peace even allowed a mob to attack a press gang. Corporal John Hastings of the *Victory*, anchored off Woolwich, felt the strength of men struggling against their own enslavement when the fifteen impressed men he held captive overpowered him and left him bruised and cut in a ditch. The seamen made their escape in the boat originally enlisted to deliver them to the fleet.¹⁵² In May 1654, seamen rioted on Tower Hill to rescue “several seamen who were imprest for the service of the commonwealth at sea.”¹⁵³ Violent resistance against impressment was not rare, nor should it be surprising. Seamen acted on what they perceived as their customary right to protect what republican theorists regarded as the most fundamental liberty of all, the security of one’s bodily freedom.

In the midst of the growing disenchantment with the Protectorate regime, the seamen’s struggle against involuntary conscription culminated in October 1654 when mutiny seemed likely on the eve of the fleet’s embarkation. The “Three Colonels Petition” sponsored by New Model officers John Okey, Matthew Alured, and Thomas Saunders challenged the Instrument of Government Act as the re-establishment of

¹⁵² CSPD March-June 1654, 124.

¹⁵³ John Cordy Jeafferson, ed., *Middlesex County Records* (London: Middlesex Co Records Society, 1888), 3:224.

tyrannical “rule by a single person.”¹⁵⁴ These “Commonwealthmen” had linked-up with the former Leveller John Wildman, who almost certainly wrote the petition. Wildman had just returned with John Lilburne from representing the East Anglian fenman in court to protest the enclosure of their land.¹⁵⁵ Working with the Leveller leadership, the Commonwealthmen branched out through a network of fellow travelers in the navy led by Admiral John Lawson, who had spoken against impressment as a fundamental violation of civil liberty. The plotters were almost certainly joined by another naval officer and friend of Lawson, John Portman.¹⁵⁶ The Leveller Edward Sexby also became a prime mover in the attempted mutiny. Betrayed by informers, Sexby managed to slip through the dragnet thrown by the Council of State and escaped to France. The Protectorate authorities also implicated another Leveller in the conspiracy, Robert Overton, then governor of the garrison at Hull, who spent the next five years in prison.¹⁵⁷ The plotters probably co-ordinated their plan in conjunction with debates Parliament conducted in the late autumn and early winter of 1654 that launched furious assaults on the Instrument of Government Act and the seeming kingly powers it had invested in Cromwell, particularly his monopoly of foreign policy and control of the army. Parliament blasted the regime’s imperial authority as “arbitrary martial law,” one that gave the government undue “power over our estates, our persons, and our lives.” That November, drawing on these criticisms and the heavy-handed secrecy with which

¹⁵⁴ Coward, *Cromwellian Protectorate*, 44; Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers* 3: 10-15; Lois Schworer, *No Standing Armies: The Anti-Army Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 61; Maurcie Ashley, *John Wildman: Plotter and Postmaster: A Study of the English Republican Movement in the Seventeenth-Century* (London, 1947), 85-87.

¹⁵⁵ Ashley, *John Wildman*, 80-82.

¹⁵⁶ Capp, *Cromwell’s Navy*, 134-137; Ashley, *John Wildman*, 84-88.

¹⁵⁷ Robert Overton, *Two letters from Major General Overton* (London, 1654); *A Declaration of the Army Concerning the Apprehending of Major Gen. Overton* (London, 1655).

Cromwell executed the planning and provisioning stages of the Western Design, Parliament also explicitly condemned the practice of impressment.¹⁵⁸

Despite this formidable opposition, the Western Design fleet embarked in December 1654 with thirty-eight ships, twelve hundred seamen, and three thousand troops under the combined command of Admiral William Penn and General Venables.¹⁵⁹ The unpopularity of the expedition had made recruiting volunteers from the New Model Army very difficult. To fill the ranks, Venables impressed convicts at Newgate before the fleet set sail.¹⁶⁰ In fact, Captain Daniel How of Colonel Carter's regiment would write from Jamaica in June that most of the troops were not soldiers at all, but "apprentices that ran away from their masters, and others that came out of Bridewell, or one gaol or another." Far from devoted republicans on a mission to liberate heathens from Spanish perfidy, both Venables and How wrote that the men were motivated by two things: fear of the gibbet and hope for Caribbean plunder.¹⁶¹ Venables described the conscripts as "born to do mischief, not to be commanded as soldiers nor to be kept in any civil order, being the most prophane, debauched persons we ever saw."¹⁶² According to seamen Henry Whistler, who kept a journal during the expedition, rumors circulated among the conscripted men that they would be sold into slavery once they reached the Caribbean. Predictably, this made the fleet's send-off anything but auspicious. "Our General commanded a gun to be fired for all the fleet to weigh anchor: and all our seamen to warn them (soldiers) to repair aboard. But many made it a warning for them to

¹⁵⁸ Schwoerer, *No Standing Armies*, 61; Coward, *Cromwellian Protectorate*, 44.

¹⁵⁹ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, 84.

¹⁶⁰ Venables, *Narrative*, xxiii; I.S., "A Brief and Perfect Journal of the Late Proceedings and Success of the English Army in the West Indies," *Harleian Miscellany*, 3: 513.

¹⁶¹ Venables, *Narrative*, 5, 40-44, 91-93, 100.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, xxvi.

hide until we were gone.”¹⁶³ Lieutenant Colonel Barrington wrote of the dockside embarkation scene, “some of the regiments were so unwilling (to board) that Major-General Disbrow his horse had to force them on board.” The rush to board separated officers from their men, and once at sea, the pressed soldiers began to stir, revealing the anxiety of those whose liberty had been stripped for involuntary servitude, the exact type of which remained unclear. Barrington recorded that the “private men were much discontented...seeing neither their officers nor their money, they concluded they were thither brought to be sold to some foreign prince.” Some of the grumblers began hatching a plot to ground their ship at the Isle of Wight, revealing the anxiety and desperation of men resisting their own enslavement.¹⁶⁴

Notwithstanding the chaotic confusion of the fleet’s departure, Venable’s instructions for the Western Design were anything but unclear. Once in the Spanish Caribbean, he was to

surprise their forts, take or beat down their castles...and to pursue, kill and destroy by all means whatsoever all those who shall oppose or resist you therein, and also to seize upon all ships and vessels which you find in the harbors, and also upon all such goods as you shall find upon the land.¹⁶⁵

The civilian commissioners instructed the officers not to let their men damage cassava, fruit trees, sugar cane, sugar mills, or any other economically valuable property they would encounter during the course of combat.¹⁶⁶ Cromwell’s own instructions to

¹⁶³ Ibid., Appendix E, 144-45.

¹⁶⁴ *Seventh Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 572.

¹⁶⁵ Venables, *Narrative*, 114.

¹⁶⁶ Venables, *Narrative*, “Instructions for Col. Bland, June 1, 1655,” Appendix C, 124. Cassava was a sort of bread fruit which found a ready market across the Caribbean as a staple food for slaves and indentured servants.

Venables highlighted the importance of capturing Spanish trade routes between Orinoco and Porto Bello, as well as shiploads of gold sailing from Peru.¹⁶⁷

This advice seems unsurprising considering that the Western Design commenced at a time of intense economic crisis in England, although the Protectorate government, influenced by Gage and Noell, spent 52732.14.2 on arms and provisions. Noell profited from the venture by gaining many of the contracts to outfit the expedition with shoes, horses, arms, and munitions. Later, we will see how Noell added to his West Indies profits through the traffic of Irish slave labor.¹⁶⁸

Due in part to Noell's illicit profiteering, England's Caribbean campaign failed miserably, suffering disastrous losses without capturing its main object, Hispaniola. The Western Design's failure and massive mortality are impossible to separate from the fraudulent dealings of its ruling-class sponsors. From its inception, the expedition reeked of profiteering and corruption. Venables long suspected the Portsmouth garrison commander, General Desborow, of profiting from the sale of supplies marked for the expedition.¹⁶⁹ Once in the Caribbean, Venables directly accused Noell of corruption. Many of the goods the merchant sold to the expedition were of inferior quality. In the critical case of weapons and ammunition, Noell failed to deliver the contracted supply.¹⁷⁰

From Barbados in the spring of 1655, General Venables wrote to the Council of State that

we desired our arms might be changed...those being extremely bad, and not fit to be made serviceable here...of 3000 men designed we brought but 2500 and not

¹⁶⁷ Venables, *Narrative*, 112

¹⁶⁸ CSPC 1574-1660, 348, 362, 404, 421, 423, 425-27, 432, 433, 441 443, 445, 446, 452, 463.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 4-5.

¹⁷⁰ Venables, *Narrative*, 13.

1600 of those well armed...wee have not any hopes to procure at any hand above 1600 firearms.¹⁷¹

Venables went on to place blame specifically on Noell for the expedition's distress.

I did not know that we have raised 3000 and not arms for 1500 of them. Mr. Noell's 1500 arms are found to be but 190. We did not doubt but my Lord and his Counsel had provided...on greater certainty than we can yet discern ...the great assurance to rest satisfied with what was assured us we should find here.¹⁷²

Daniel How, an officer in the expedition wrote, "all the loss we had at Hispaniola was occasioned thereby, was for want of arms, provisions, and of guides."¹⁷³ The problems occasioned by the shortage of guides will become apparent later, but How's complaint about arms and provisions and Venables' bitterness over Noell's fraudulent dealings signify the general desperation that characterized the entire mission, one that the historian Bernard Capp has described as the Protectorate's greatest foreign policy disaster.¹⁷⁴

Insufficient supply due to corrupt contracting wrought catastrophic consequences for the troops. In the first case, the soldiers simply did not have enough to eat. What "beastly" bread they had approached the inedible. Malnutrition and disease thus plagued the ranks, causing much avoidable suffering. Venables complained that

We had bad bread, and little of it or other victuals not the standing gentleman's order, so that they were very weak at landing, and some instead of three days provision at landing had but one which they marched 5 days with and therefore fell to eat limes, oranges and lemons, which gave them into fluxes and fevers. I had my share for near a fortnight, with cruel gripings that I could scarce stand.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Bodleian Library, Carte Ms 74 fol.43

¹⁷² Ibid. Colonel Barrington wrote that the expedition made up in part for the arms deficiency by stealing weapons from Barbados planters.

¹⁷³ Venables, *Narrative*, 40.

¹⁷⁴ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, 84.

¹⁷⁵ Venables, *Narrative*, 34.

The shortness of provisions also compelled Admiral Penn to refuse Venables' repeated pleas to re-supply the men with victuals on Hispaniola. Noell knew the conditions that the men would face, having survived for years in the blistering Caribbean heat.

Nonetheless, he sold the army shoddy footwear and neglected to provide the troops with "black jacks," or water bottles. Reporting from the front, Venables wrote,

the weather extreme hot and little water our feet scorched through our shoes, and men and horses died of thirst, but if any had liquour put into their mouths presently after they fell they would recover else die in an instant...(waterbottles) are more needful here than knapsacks in Ireland.¹⁷⁶

Once in battle on Hispaniola, as General Venables described, their meager and inferior supplies proved wholly ineffective.

Having fasted two days, every man of us, our ammunition spent, no water and men ready to faint, and some died, the eagerness and heat of the fight had drawn them beyond their strength, whereupon it was resolved by a council of war to retreat...never did my eyes see men more discouraged, being scarce able to make them stand.¹⁷⁷

When Venables ordered the men back into action, they mutinied.

Other factors kept the island of Hispaniola in Spanish hands. Noell's misinformation, not unrelated to his profiteering, played a large part in the failure. The ten thousand colonial troops that he promised from Barbados never materialized, and the expedition wasted three months in the Caribbean pressing men before the approach on Hispaniola. Secondly, Penn and Venables' disagreements over strategy doomed any chance for a military victory. In the end, Venables, abandoning his plan for a direct landing at Saint Domingue, led his men on a forty mile overland march that both exhausted the troops and gave the outnumbered Spanish time to plan a successful

¹⁷⁶ Bodleian Library Carte Ms 74 fol.37. Parentheses mine.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. All of the Design's accounts comment upon the acute shortage of water and its fatal effects. See in particular, Venables, *Narrative*, Appendix D, 127, and Appendix E, 152.

defense.¹⁷⁸ A description of the fighting on Hispaniola leaves a vivid impression of the ensuing carnage.¹⁷⁹ “The enemy...routed the horse that came up to charge, and all the van of the army, so that enemy with their lances killed until they were weary of killing.” The action on Hispaniola alone cost the English over one thousand men in twenty days.¹⁸⁰

Combat combined with disease to produce a mortality rate that exceeded fifty percent of the original expedition force.¹⁸¹ Seamen had expected as much. “Plague” and the “bloody flux” took a heavy toll.¹⁸² A soldier on Jamaica gave this horrifying account of how the English wilted in the tropics: “Never did my eyes see such a sickly time, nor so many funerals and graves all the town over that it is a very Golgotha...some of the soldiery are buried so shallow that the Spanish dogs which lurk about the town scrape them and eat them.”¹⁸³ The Committee of Trade had contracted with its leading member Martin Noell for one hundred tons of brandy, which the army’s surgeons would use to treat wounded and diseased soldiers. The brandy never arrived and Noell presumably pocketed the funds. This resulted in the preventable deaths of even more men.¹⁸⁴

But perhaps the most injurious act committed by Noell and Gage involved not profiteering, but a false promise.¹⁸⁵ As mentioned above, the reliable colonial troops guaranteed by Gage could not be found, which hampered the expedition’s progress,

¹⁷⁸ Venables, *Narrative*, 20, 28; The animosity that developed between Venables and Penn through their conflicts over tactics and strategy were complicated by Venables’ accusation that Penn used plunder taken in the expedition for his own enrichment. See Venables, *Narrative*, 54-59.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., Appendix D, 130-136, 140-141.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., Appendix D, 131, 135.

¹⁸¹ Capp, *Cromwell’s Navy*, 88; Venables, *Narrative*, Appendix B, 116-122.

¹⁸² Venables, *Narrative*, Appendix E, 156 provides an exceptionally vivid account of the disease-ravaged soldiers.

¹⁸³ Ibid., Appendix D, 142-143.

¹⁸⁴ Venables, *Narrative*, 49.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 40-44. Consult these pages for an effective description of the “misinformation” and corruption which plagued the Western Design.

compelling the fleet to employ impressment on a grander scale that dreadfully recapitalized another form of unfree labor in the Atlantic world, Irish slaves. Besides English convicts, indentured servants, and “spirited” apprentices, the imperial armada included Irish slaves from Barbados, Nevis, and St. Kitts, where many had been transported by Venables after the conquest of Ireland in 1649. Obviously hostile to the English, these “cabbage stalk” soldiers, armed with ten-foot pikes made of jungle vegetation, untrained for military service and weakened by plantation slavery proved predictably “unreliable” in battle.¹⁸⁶ Of course, the planters found impressment as odious as the merchant ship captains who lamented the state’s conscription of seamen. As Lieutenant Colonel Barrington recognized, impressment depleted the plantation workforce and left the plantocracy “utterly ruined in case their servants were taken from them, they being their livelihood...their whole estate lay in the good stock of servants.” In their “haste to press,” Barrington said, the officers “were guilty of ruining the estates of cooperative men.”¹⁸⁷ This dispute between Barbados planters and New Model officers only foreshadowed a protracted, centuries-long struggle that arose periodically when the economic interests of the colonial ruling-classes collided with those of the imperial state.

Because ruling-class duplicity had left the fleet and army so poorly fed, manned, and equipped, the officers were forced to raise money to feed and arm their sickened, battle-

¹⁸⁶ O’Callaghan, *Hell or Barbados*, 131. Scots also had been shipped to Barbados during the Civil War and afterwards. See LaFantasie, ed., *Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 2: 260-262. In September of 1648, the House of Commons labored to distinguish between Scots who served voluntarily and those who had been pressed into service against the English; the volunteers were shipped to Barbados as indentured servants.

¹⁸⁷ *Seventh Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 572. Poorer planters, unsurprisingly, bore the brunt of impressment. Barrington wrote that the gangs operated with such “irregularity” that “many lost all their servants, and others but few (if any) who far exceeded the former in estates ten times over...and ten times more.” Florence E. Dyer, “Captain Christopher Myngs in the West Indies,” *Mariner’s Mirror* 18 (1932), 168-172.

weary men. The desperate measures they undertook only multiplied the forms of unfree labor exploited by the English in their Caribbean venture. New England merchants, who could have helped supply the expedition with foodstuffs, refused credit to their co-religionists in the New Model Navy. To address these financial woes, and perhaps to turn a profit for himself, General Venables, cursing Noell's inconvenient corruption and battling an acute case of dysentery, engaged in an impromptu flurry of slave trading after appropriating a hapless Dutch slave ship that had docked in Barbados. After selling the cargo of 246 "Negroes" to local planters "for about 5162," Venables went on to complain that the "15 shot a man" supplied by Noell was "a most inconsiderable proportion to have hunted Tories in Ireland with."¹⁸⁸ "Tories" in this case were Irish Catholics partisans who resisted Cromwell's conquest of Ireland, and as Venables' comment indicates, he had once 'hunted' them in Ireland to kill or to sell into slavery in the West Indies.¹⁸⁹ In the Caribbean, he engaged in the African slave trade to raise money for weapons to arm the same Irish slaves that he had shipped to Barbados.

Poor planning, empty promises, and corruption led to desperate and stunningly inept decisions on the part of Venables, who foolishly pressed Irish and Africans as military guides on Hispaniola, some of whom had escaped to the island after having been enslaved on the English colony of Barbados. This led inevitably to disaster. On April 16, 1655, an African who learned to speak English during his slave days on Barbados led Colonel Buller into an ambush outside Saint Domingue.¹⁹⁰ Other Irish in the Caribbean took the opportunity to strike a blow against the government that had executed their priests, confiscated their land, driven them into exile, and sold them into the brutal life of

¹⁸⁸ Bodleian Library, Carte Ms 74 fol.37; Venables, *Narrative*, 34; Appendix D, 140-141.

¹⁸⁹ Venables, *Narrative*, vii; Prendergast, *Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland*, 325-362.

¹⁹⁰ Venables, *Narrative*, 27; Appendix E, 153.

plantation slavery. An English officer reported the next day that an Irish guide commandeered on Hispaniola “gave us false intelligence, though we compelled him with us, which afterwards cost him his life.” Venables’ men killed their false Irish friend because he had led them into an ambush of Spanish soldiers commanded by a “Coll. Murfy an Irishman on horseback, being in the head of the Spaniards” who “waved a handkerchief...and brandished a broad fauchion” which commenced the Spanish attack, pinning the English down “without water” until midnight.¹⁹¹

Although English commanders had issued proclamations of freedom to Hispaniola slaves, perhaps Irish tales of their nation’s conquest prevented the mass exodus of Africans to Venables’ army.¹⁹² While they rejected the English overture, enslaved Africans accepted the Spanish promise of liberation conditioned upon joining in battle against the English. As Henry Whistler and Captain White noted from their own combat experience, the expedition faced mostly Africans and mulattos while they fought the “Spanish” on Hispaniola. These newly-designated soldiers wore “pardons” of freedom around their necks as they fought with an English republican army manned by pressed men who regarded their service as slavery.¹⁹³

Unfree labor in the English Republic’s pursuit of imperial expansion could be deployed in a multitude of ways, although not all of them, as the Western Design showed, proved entirely effective. Even had they had enough to eat, drink, and shoot, the impressed men ranging from English convicts to Irish slaves knew that they were being used as pawns by those who had stolen their liberty. In fact, members of the rank-and-file in the English and Spanish armies had class commonalities that outweighed

¹⁹¹ Ibid., Appendix D, 132. Also see Appendix E, 154.

¹⁹² Ibid., Appendix D, 130.

¹⁹³ Venables, *Narrative*, Appendix E, 156. Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 60.

differences of color, language, religion, and nation –many shared the experience of having been forced into different forms of involuntary servitude around the Atlantic world.

The common class experience of unfree labor shaped the character of combat and discipline in both armies during the Western Design. It could hardly be expected that conscription into the army would yield the classical republican martial vigor described so glowingly by republican sages. English commanders were plagued by the discontent of their impressed men. The fleet again came close to mutiny during the middle of the expedition, when pay and plunder were withheld from the seamen and army, when both had been promised at the outset.¹⁹⁴ Shortly after, Venables chose to enforce discipline through exemplary terror: for insubordination, he ordered whipping, riding “the wooden horse,” and “burning through the tongue.” Deserters were hanged.¹⁹⁵ Conversely, commanders of the Spanish forces rarely faced these difficulties, as Colonel Murfy, the Irish and African guides, and the African soldiers on Spanish-held Hispaniola revealed. The spirit of liberty in arms so vaunted by Nedham and his peers could plainly be seen in the ranks of the Spanish army, filled as they were by Africans and Irish fighting for their freedom.

The joint struggle of the Irish and Africans in the Spanish army on Hispaniola was part of an ongoing Caribbean proletarian tradition, one in which unfree laborers from distant parts of the world combined in collective resistance to their brutal exploitation. In an incident later that November, Venables’ advisor Colonel Holdept, who had witnessed a terribly destructive (to plantation property) rebellion of black and white slaves in 1649,

¹⁹⁴ Venables, *Narrative*, 25.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 34, 45.

ordered Colonel Hawley to suppress a general uprising of black and Irish slaves on Barbados, a revolt that took advantage of the disruptions to labor discipline caused by the conscription of servants for the Western Design.¹⁹⁶ A few years later, the expedition's Colonel D'Oyler, the old Irish Tory-hunter who became governor of Jamaica, would encounter similar difficulties in trying to prevent uprisings of African and Irish slaves.¹⁹⁷

Despite the resistance offered by slaves, soldiers, and seamen, expedition officers and Caribbean planters recognized the ultimate profitability of deploying unfree labor in the mutually sustaining ventures of conquest and colonization, which left initial supporters of the Design, including John Milton, wondering about its alleged religious purpose of spreading English liberty and the Protestant Reformation. Reflecting on the promise of a Protestant crusade against Spanish Catholicism, General Venables' own wife wrote,

We were posted out of Ireland and by a very unjust power...nothing of their promises performed. They pretended the honor of God and the propagation of the gospel. But alas! Their intention was self-honour and riches...and so the Design prospered according to their hypocrisy...success was very ill, for the work of God was not like to be done by the devil's instruments.¹⁹⁸

She was not alone in her disaffection.

England's seamen and soldiers shared Mrs. Venables' view of the inequities of the Western Design. The 1654 impressment campaign in England and the bloody defeat on Hispaniola in the summer of 1655 precipitated a radical backlash amongst the rank-

¹⁹⁶ O'Callaghan, *Hell or Barbados*, 123-124. Another uprising was crushed on Barbados two years later. The ringleaders of the revolt were arranged naked in the shape of a cross, nailed to the ground, burned inch by inch over their body, and decapitated. Afterwards, colonial officials ordered that the rebels' heads be spitted on pikes. This represents only one in thousands of examples of how Caribbean colonial governments developed methods of exemplary terror to ensure labor discipline in the emerging slave-based plantation economy, a labor discipline that ensured steady production, maximum profitability, and consistent imperial revenue.

¹⁹⁷ Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 125-126.; Hillary McD. Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 1627-1715* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989).

¹⁹⁸ Venables, *Narrative*, xl.

and-file of the expedition. They did not subscribe to the view advanced by influential republican ideologues that the campaign represented part of a worldwide crusade against monarchy and Anti-christ; they understood the expedition from the perspective of a brutally exploited, imperial labor force. The Commonwealth's Deputy Advocate in Jamaica William Staynor examined Colonel Henry Archbould in 1656 for saying the dead had died "unworthily" because the Lord Protector had failed to "make good their engagement."¹⁹⁹ In a letter home from Barbados, Henry Whistler noted the motley composition of the island and reacted with revulsion at the enslavement of Africans and Irish.

The gentry here does live far better than ours does in England; they have most of them 100 or 2 or 3 of slaves apiece who they command as they please...they have that liberty of conscience which we in England so long fought for, but they do abuse it. This island is inhabited by all sorts, English, French, Dutch, Scots, Irish, Spaniards they being Jews, with Ingones and miserable Negors born to perpetual slavery they and their seed. Our English hear doth think a negor child the first day it is born to be worth 5li, they cost them nothing bringing up, they go always naked. Some planters will have 30 more or less about 4 or 5 years old. They sell them from one to the other as we do sheep. This island is the dunghill whereon England doth cast forth its rubbish.²⁰⁰

Whistler viewed slavery as an abomination, and an abuse of the freedoms exercised under "liberty of conscience," a blasphemous perversion of the practical Christian truth that God desired the liberty of his creation from all forms of inward and outward bondage.

But the Western Design, as a colonial project of conquest, would stimulate, rather than negate the expansion of slavery. Writing from Jamaica in January 1657, Colonel Brayne remarked,

¹⁹⁹ Bodleian Library Rawl Ms A 37.327.

²⁰⁰ Venables, *Narrative*, Appendix E, 146.

We have here about 5000 men well armed, and I hope well resolved, who now apply themselves seriously to planting, in which I hope they will succeed well, the product of this place being as good as any in the West Indies. Our greatest wants will be servants, which if we once had, I think we should be the richest plantation in the West Indies.

As Brayne recognized, colonization, and the wealth it would bring planters, merchants, and the republic, would be built on the foundation of unfree labor.²⁰¹ Soon after the capture of Jamaica, English capitalists recognized the economic value of the island, and urged its colonization in tracts such as *A Description in Part of What the Island of Jamaica Yields, and the Considerations Those shall Have which will go thither* (1656).²⁰² In fact, the Protector promised to deploy ten thousand more men to secure the settlement and plantation of Jamaica in September 1655. This entailed an even greater expansion of naval and military impressment.²⁰³ To many of Cromwell's former allies and supporters, however, the expansion of impressment directly contradicted fundamental principles of republican liberty.

The most direct resistance to the renewed impressment campaigns came from the seamen and soldiers themselves. Back in England, resistance to impressments rose in proportion to the expansion of conscription as captains discovered when executing a Council of State order to forcibly mobilize seamen in Lynn, Hull, Chatham and Scotland. In August 1656, Captain William Watts, who intended to sail with provisions from the Downs to Jamaica reported that, "no sooner were the soldiers on board than the seamen all ran away, so that the ship cannot sail." Captain Watts ended his letter by pleading for a "warrant to take from other ships or press."²⁰⁴ Captain Pownell of *The Eaglet*, also

²⁰¹ Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 86-87.

²⁰² Bodleian Library Rawl Ms A 37.45.

²⁰³ Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 52-53.

²⁰⁴ CSPD 1656-1657, 57, 400-413.

anchored in the Downs, found that his new crew had deserted to the safer environs of the collier fleet after returning from Jamaica. Captain Richard Newberry in Rochester found no men at all to press.²⁰⁵ In Yarmouth, an observer reported that sailors exclaimed that, “they would rather be hanged than pressed for the West Indies.”²⁰⁶ Sailors who complained to a baker about his bread were told “they would like it if they were in Jamaica.” This fresh retort received a swift response, and the baker found himself wandering about the remains of his shop, nursing a black eye and sweeping up broken glass.²⁰⁷

Beyond local scuffles and black-eyed bakers, this discontent had particularly threatening possibilities for the government, given the growing republican opposition to the regime. Reaching Portsmouth from Jamaica, Captain Willoughby of the *Rainbow* wrote urgently to Cromwell and the Council of State.

The Rainbow has arrived; wants money to discharge the unruly seamen, who are under no command on shore, and to supply emergencies, as people are continually applying for their due...the stores are destitute, and 20 months’ pay is due to the company of the Sailors lying in the roads. If a supply is not quickly sent, the odium cast upon their actions will not be easily repaired.²⁰⁸

Even before receiving Willoughby’s message, Cromwell had anticipated that the return of the fleet from Jamaica would be dangerous for the regime. War-weary, unpaid, impressed seamen, Cromwell reasoned, would provide prime recruiting material for the republican sects that had been organizing against him back in England. His suspicions were, as the next chapter will reveal, entirely correct.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 551.

²⁰⁶ Capp, *Cromwell’s Navy*, 267.

²⁰⁷ CSPD 1656-1657, 550.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 447.

In this chapter we have explored several aspects of the Atlantic-wide impact of the birth of the English Republic. Perhaps the most crucial of these was the rise of the first British Empire. Republicans were never wholly united or divided around the government's bids for imperial expansion. The Leveller opposition to the conquest of Ireland in 1649 organized around the idea that forced conscription and self-interested conquests of mercenary armies violated fundamental principles of republican justice, which they defined in practical Christian terms. We have seen how this political application of practical Christianity formed an important strain in republican thought and organization during the Putney Debates, in criticisms of the Rump's lack of reforming zeal, the support of the radical initiatives of the Barebones Parliament, and in critiques of the Protectorate.

However, republican principles linked to the millennial advance of the Protestant reformation across the globe could unite republicans of all stripes. The Rump Parliament and army leadership used these to justify the Anglo-Dutch War, which received support from the same radicals who had opposed the Irish invasion. Radicals briefly found a place in the republican ruling-class during the Barebone's Assembly. But these saints linked their apocalyptic expectations to the types of political and social reforms feared by their godly brethren who wielded the reigns of power in the regime. It was their unyielding practical Christian approach to domestic reform that led Cromwell and the Council of State to conclude that they faced a revival of the leveling spirit of the late 1640s. Thus, the hopes for a radical reformation of the church and state based upon the practical Christian substance of radical republicanism were dashed by the dissolution of the Barebones Parliament (1653), which precipitated the organization of the nascent Fifth

Monarchist movement led in part by ex-New Englanders. Suppressing army, civilian, and parliamentary radicalism paved the way for the construction of an imperial state along classic republican lines that prioritized the expansion of its domestic and foreign dominion over the practical Christian concerns of the regime's critics.

England's most ambitious move towards an Atlantic empire commenced in 1654 after victory in the Anglo-Dutch War and matured with the attempt later in the year to conquer the Spanish Caribbean through the Western Design, a project inspired by Cromwell's American advisors on the corruption-riddled Committee for Trade. The Western Design required the massive mobilization of unfree labor in the form of impressments, while it sought to build an empire by re-planting Chesapeake and New England colonists in the Caribbean who would utilize Irish, Scottish, Native American, and African slave labor on cash crop plantations. Although the corruption of Cromwell's advisors hampered the success of the campaign, the expedition did acquire the island of Jamaica, giving England a sizeable colonial foothold in the Spanish West Indies. However, the carnage, and what radicals viewed as the mercenary principles of the Western Design, alienated large sections of the soldiery and seamen, who would return with devastating tales indicting the Protectorate government for corruption, ineptitude, and inequity. In the next chapter, we will see how England's trans-Atlantic, radical republicans drew on the failure of the West Indies expedition to mobilize popular political disaffection against the Protectorate regime.

CHAPTER SIX

“THE ACCURSED THING”: EMPIRE, UNFREE LABOR, AND THE POLITICS OF PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY, 1655-1657

*Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
But justice and some fatal curse annexed,
Deprives them of their outward liberty,
Their inward lost.*

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book XII¹

Through the dark lanes of Katherine’s Stairs, seamen on liberty swaggered from one tavern to another, led by the sweet sound of the fiddle and the promise of more rum. Coal smoke hung heavily in the London air, mixing with the acrid sweat of draymen and dockers. But here and there, one might also catch the scent of exotic perfumes drifting down from the neighborhood’s many bawdy houses. The cries of street peddlers and booksellers combined strangely with the earnest prayers and angry sermons that rang out from Fifth Monarchist meetinghouses that lay scattered throughout the warren of alleys near the docks. Amidst this scene of toil, license, and energy, a crowd of men and women of all descriptions surged down a lane on a wave of rage and desperation. Cowering in fear from this angry mob was a small man, dressed in a suit of once fashionable but now greasy and tattered clothes. A young mariner wearing a tar-stained jacket rolled through the crowd on bowed legs and dealt the man a sharp blow with a calloused hand. Acting as the people’s prosecutor, the mariner accused the sobbing wretch of “spiriting” a young man away from his St. Katherine’s home. The crowd grew angrier as they recalled how their own friends, sons, daughters, mothers, and fathers had been “Barbadosed” and sold into slavery on West Indian sugar and tobacco plantations

¹ Northrop Frye, ed., *Paradise Lost and Selected Poetry and Prose* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967), 289.

by men like the one trembling in front of them. Others had been pressed for naval service in the Western Design; others still had been “kidnapped” or “trepanned” as infantrymen for the Caribbean armada and its subsequent relief expeditions. The staggering 50% mortality rate suffered by the impressed men produced a deep sense of pathos in their friends and relatives among the crowd, a pathos that fueled their rage and the vicious beating they dealt their hapless prisoner.²

During the years of the Commonwealth, and for many decades afterward, dockside neighborhoods like St. Katherine’s would bear the bloody burden of the state’s commitment to imperial expansion. After the smoke of battle had cleared and Jamaica lay securely in English hands, the Western Design had produced an upward spike in the demand for a spectrum of unfree labor that ranged from soldiers and sailors to servants and slaves. Following the course taken by Barbados, Jamaica’s conversion to slave-labor sugar production translated into economic opportunity for spirits, slave-traders, planters, and the Protectorate’s favored financiers, although it led directly to the lost liberties of thousands of young men and women from St. Katherine’s and other poor, maritime quarters around Britain and Ireland. They would be transported, “against their consciences,” across the Atlantic to labor as slaves for those who reigned over the islands purchased with the blood of their friends, families, and neighbors during the Western Design. The crowd described above was not rare nor extraordinary –such combustible assemblies were features of everyday life in the working-class quarters of English port

² Jeafferson, ed., *Middlesex County Records*, 3: 254, 258, 278. This description is an amalgam of different crowd actions launched against London spirits during the Interregnum.

cities. But in neighborhoods like St. Katherine's, the creeping spirits and prowling press gangs inspired more than crowd actions, they helped fuel the organization of a revolutionary movement devoted to abolishing what the radicals described as the yokes of outward bondage.

In this chapter, I will explore how the defeat of the Western Design served as a providential sign to the Protectorate's opponents that God had abandoned England. For saints who had seen the hand of God in every victory of the New Model Army since the Battle of Naseby in 1645, this certainly came as a devastating recognition. When the disastrous news reached England with the return of the fleet, critics of the Cromwellian regime struggled to discern why God had so suddenly withdrawn his favor from the Good Old Cause. It certainly wasn't that England's radicals had qualms about spreading the revolution beyond Britain. All English republicans believed that the march against antichristian, monarchical tyranny should move out and across the Continent until Protestant religion and commonwealth liberty had triumphed around the world.³ The revolution embodied millennial expectations in an age of apocalyptic enthusiasm and anxiety. As Thomas Venner, the ex-New Englander and London Fifth Monarchist proclaimed in his manifesto *A Door of Hope Opened*, the war against outward bondage was "much more than a national quarrel." Only the eventual conquests of Spain, France, and Germany could defend Protestants from Catholic persecution and monarchical tyranny.⁴ So it seems plausible at the outset that most republican saints would have

³ See Christopher Hill's excellent chapter on this subject entitled, "The Reign of the Saints," *English Bible*, 299-313.

⁴ Thomas Venner, *A Door of Hope Opened* (London, 1661), 4. Support for a continental crusade for Protestant empire continued to build throughout the Interregnum, inspired by landmark events in Protestant persecution such as the Duke of Savoy's 1655 massacre of the Vaudois (also known as the

regarded the Caribbean campaign against their absolutist archrival as a providentially favored cause that might, in the words of Roger Williams, dry up the Euphrates of the imperial Babylon, or the Caribbean lifeblood of the Spanish Empire.

Yet, following the writing of classical, Renaissance, and Christian humanists, as well as the impassioned preaching of sectarian radicals, the belief remained among republicans that foreign conquests must embody just causes and produce just ends for the benefit of the commonwealth and humankind, and not a particular faction within the state. If the rhetoric of liberty and liberation obscured more arbitrary and self-interested ends, it would amount to perverse tyranny.⁵ Many English republicans would come to view the Western Design and the Protectorate government in these terms. But one must also consider that even before the expedition, many of the radicals had come to view the Protectorate as a corrupt, neo-monarchical regime that ruled through the power of the sword and had turned the nation's armed forces into instruments of military tyranny, the "mercenary armies" that the army had repeatedly defined itself against in 1647 at Putney, in 1649 at Burford, in 1650 at Musselburg, and in 1654 at Spithead. Given the steadfast faith in providential justice, what did the Protectorate's critics see in the Western Design that provided proof positive of the revolution's antichristian turn?

Waldensians) in their Piedmont enclave. Venner specifically called for England to help this beleaguered population.

⁵ Maurizio Viroli, "Machiavelli and the Republican Idea of Politics," in Bock, Skinner, and Viroli, eds., *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, 158-160; Michael Mallet, "The Theory and Practice of Warfare in Machiavelli's Republic," in *ibid.*, 173-180; Jonathan Scott, "What were Commonwealth Principles?" *Historical Journal* 47 (2004), 591-613; *England's Troubles*, 306-313; Blair Worden, "Marchamont Nedham and the Beginnings of English Republicanism," in Wooton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society*, 48, 72-75; "James Harrington and the Commonwealth of Oceana, 1656," in *ibid.*, 101-104.

Fleshing out the possible answers to this question will help us explore how practical Christian language and Fifth Monarchist political organization developed in relation to the mobilization and deployment of unfree labor across the Atlantic world of the first British Empire. Ultimately, two former New Englanders, Henry Vane and Thomas Venner, would emerge as leaders of the radical republican backlash, and despite different priorities and courses of action, they would consolidate their efforts in 1657 to bring down the Protectorate regime.

By the summer of 1655, trans-Atlantic radicals could point to a litany of broken promises that in their view had reduced the Republic to a tyrannical “junto” or “mushroom government” dominated by the Lord Protector and his Council of State. Many like Henry Vane, who had refused to join the Protectorate government, pointed first to Cromwell’s decision to close the Rump Parliament in April 1653. Other former New Englanders like Wentworth Day, William Aspinwall, John Clarke, and Thomas Venner looked toward the December 1654 dissolution of the Barebones Assembly. They all regarded the subsequent establishment of the Protectorate as the restoration of a de-facto English monarchy. All of these men feared that the government would use the newly established Court of Triers much like the Stuarts had used High Commission to restrict liberty of conscience.⁶ In 1654 and 1655, moves toward censorship of the press, and the imprisonment of Fifth Monarchists such as Christopher Feake, John Rogers, and General Harrison increased their disdain for the government.⁷ Rumors also swirled around republican circles that Cromwell entertained serious thoughts about taking on the

⁶ Bodleian Library, Rawl Ms A 47.21. In May 1656, the Fifth Monarchist John Rogers described the Court of Triers, not without exaggeration, as a later day “High Commission.”

⁷ *Clarke Papers*, 3: 39,53; Rogers, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 62-77. The Levellers John Lilburne and Robert Overton also suffered imprisonment during this period.

title of King to give the regime the legitimacy it lacked abroad and at home. In August 1655, the Council of State announced the unpopular decision to zone England into ten military districts governed by the “major generals,” the hardcore of the New Model leadership still loyal to Cromwell.⁸ The timing could not have been worse. As the country absorbed the shock of military decimation, word began filtering back from the West Indies of the Western Design’s bloody failure.

Although defeat in the Caribbean quickly turned the national mood ugly, Cromwell himself might have borne the news the hardest, locking himself in his “closet” for a day upon receiving word of the disaster. He kept a succession of private fasts, and issued calls for days of public humiliation in December 1655 and March 1656.⁹ Formerly unshakeable in his providential convictions, the Lord Protector now felt utterly rebuked by God. In a letter to Admiral Goodson, the officer who relieved Venables, Cromwell wrote,

It is not to be denied but the Lord hath greatly humbled us in that sad loss sustained at Hispaniola; no doubt we have provoked the Lord, and it is good for us to know, and be abased for the same...And though he has torn us up, yet he will heal us.¹⁰

The question to be answered, of course, was why had God had so clearly withdrawn his favor from the saints? The growing literature on this subject shows that contemporaries attributed the failure of the Western Design to the Biblical curse known as the “sin of Achan.” A soldier in the Israelite army commanded by Joshua, Achan had fought against the enemies of God’s people in the conquest of Jericho. But despite God’s prohibitions against pillaging after the battle, Achan’s lust for gold had led him on a course of

⁸ Coward, *Cromwellian Protectorate*, 64-84.

⁹ Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 60; Armitage, “Languages of Empire,” 540.

¹⁰ Cromwell to Goodson, 30 October 1655, quoted in Armitage, “Language of Empire,” 542.

thievery. Consequently, his greed caused God to withdraw his favor from Israel, leading ultimately led to its humiliating defeat by the forces of Ai. After the battle, Joshua searched for the “accursed thing” which had led God to smite his own people.¹¹ What, according to seventeenth-century English republicans, was the “accursed thing” that had driven God from England?

The growing chorus of critics, certainly not all radicals, found the “sin of Achan” within the Protectorate itself, and their concerted voices, lifted in the wake of the Western Design, contributed to a pivotal moment (1655-57) in the development of English republicanism when Cromwell finally lost the confidence of most of his former allies.¹² For example, Arthur Haselrigge, who as a powerful Rumper had opposed Henry Marten’s republican faction, joined with Ashley Cooper, the future Lord Shaftesbury and patron of John Locke, to oppose the Lord Protector. Both had been excluded by Cromwell from the First Protectorate Parliament. Even John Lambert deserted Cromwell for fear that “rule by the sword” had undone the constitution established through the Instrument of Government.¹³ Lambert, we should remember, initially counseled Cromwell against the expedition. Many leading figures of the regime published tracts that year, offering answers to the confusion surrounding the state of affairs in England. Among these numbered Marchmont Needham, long in Cromwell’s employ, whose *Excellencie of a*

¹¹ Blair Worden, “Oliver Cromwell and the Sin of Achan,” in Derek Beales and Geoffrey Best, eds., *History, Society and the Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); “Providence and Politics in Cromwellian England,” *Past and Present* 109 (1985), 92-99.

¹² David Armitage has also recognized the significance of the Western Design’s failure on Cromwell’s already crumbling support among republicans. See *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, 136 for this, and the entirety of Chapter 5, “Liberty and Empire” for a compelling discussion on the complex and often conflicting relationships republican theorists (from Machiavelli to Algernon Sidney) constructed between national power, constitutional protections of liberty, and expansion abroad.

¹³ Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 68-69.

Free State contained reprinted articles from *Mercurius Politicus* warning against the republic's moral decline.¹⁴

A more famous example, of course, may be found in the writing of James Harrington, whose republican classic *Oceana* came off the press two days after the second Protectorate Parliament convened in September, 1656. As Harrington's brilliance gained notoriety that fall, readers of Marchmont Nedham's weekly, *Mercurius Politicus*, would be treated to the serialized publication of *Oceana*, a testament to the work's rapid penetration of Interregnum political discourse.¹⁵ Whether through bound tracts or cheap newspapers, however, Harrington's theory emerged clearly: the Protectorate had failed to erect the "political architecture," or constitutional frame of government, to support a workable, virtuous republic.¹⁶ Missing the proper structure, powerful interests had appropriated the machinery of government to serve their own ends. Like Machiavelli, Harrington abhorred government by a single person and favored a "popular government" or "democracy." But, to stabilize the subversive potential of a broader franchise, he instituted the "agrarian law" which allowed for an equitable distribution of property that would prevent the politicization of propertyless masses. It also forestalled the perpetuation of an entrenched, self-serving aristocracy.¹⁷ The practical success of this system, not to mention the vitality of the commonwealth principles it enshrined, depended in turn on a constitution that mixed classical elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy in proper balance. The rotation of office holders would also

¹⁴ Marchmont Needham, *The Excellencie of a Free State* (London, 1656).

¹⁵ Armitage, "Languages of Empire," 548; Worden, "James Harrington and the Commonwealth of Oceana," in Wootton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society, 1649-1776*, 82.

¹⁶ Pocock, ed., *Works of James Harrington*, 609.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 164, 201, 528,

work against corrupt and ambitious interests from taking root in government.¹⁸ Turning again to Roman and Greek history, Harrington endeavored to define the character of a just foreign policy that would create a “commonwealth of increase.” If England reformed its constitution and a just republic flourished, it would have the responsibility in an age of absolute monarchy to export its revolution abroad to liberate others who suffered under the yoke of royal tyrants. These wars would in turn cultivate the “civitas” or “public spirit” that strengthened popular fidelity to the republic.¹⁹ Harrington’s ultimate end was virtue and justice, a millennial, transcendent, global liberation from the outward bondage of slavery and the inward bondage of lustful self-interest from which it originated.²⁰ An “empire of laws” would compel the nation and its citizens to act in bold, expansionistic, but just fashion, thus enabling the English Republic to escape the classical fates of lethal impotence and self-defeating tyranny.²¹ Drawing inspiration from the prophet Amos, Harrington gushed that the English Commonwealth would rule “an empire of the world” where “justice would run down like a river, and righteousness like a mighty stream.”²²

In this light, although he certainly found fault with the Protectorate constitution, did Harrington believe that the republic had degenerated into an imperial tyranny? As we saw in Chapter Four, the engagements of the New Model Army equated mercenary armies with “kingly power,” the tyrannical force of government that utilized impressment and other forms of unfree labor to increase the state’s imperial dominion through the

¹⁸ Ibid., 168, 181, 230, 248, 342.

¹⁹ Ibid., 322-33.

²⁰ Scott, “Commonwealth Principles,” 609.

²¹ Pocock, ed., *Works of James Harrington*, 321.

²² Ibid., 333.

blood and slavery of its own citizens and innocents abroad.²³ Harrington's critique, like the Levellers', aimed at promoting martial voluntarism in the service of the commonwealth, although it should be noted that he did warn against the arming of the poor, lest those with property make themselves "the vassals of their servants."²⁴ This would have put him at odds with many of the sectaries whom otherwise shared his views of the Protectorate as a "usurpation" and a "perfidious yoke" "supported with blood."²⁵ Milton later echoed Harrington's denunciations of Cromwell's imperial ambition in *Paradise Lost*. Although he published the classic work a decade after *Oceana*, the poet chose Satan, the fallen angel of pride, to represent Cromwell:

Honour and empire with revenge enlarged
By conquering this new world, compels me now
To do what else though damned I should abhor
So spake the fiend, and with necessity,
The tyrants plea, excluded his devilish deeds.²⁶

Harrington and Milton both concluded that instead of breaking the yokes of outward bondage, the Protectorate government had multiplied them, squandering England's opportunity to transform temporal into sacred time by advancing the Reformation through the establishment of a just republic.

An argument has recently been advanced that these and other related works represented self-critiques and reflections on the fallen state of human nature.²⁷ This may be true in that Harrington and Milton recognized that all men, prone to pride and

²³ *A Declaration or Representation from Sir Thomas Fairfax and the Army Under his Command* (London, 1647) in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 404; also quoted in Holstun, *Ehud's Dagger*, 211.

²⁴ Pocock, ed., *Works of James Harrington*, 312.

²⁵ Blair Worden, "Harrington's *Oceana*: Origins and Aftermath, 1651-1660," in Wootton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society*, 125. Although Worden argues that Harrington wrote much of the *Oceana* before 1654, its public release was occasioned by the groundswell of opposition to the Protectorate after the failure of the Western Design.

²⁶ Scott, "Commonwealth Principles," 612; This stanza may also be found in Armitage, "John Milton: Poet Against Empire," in Armitage, Himy, and Skinner, eds., *Milton and Republicanism*, 217-221.

²⁷ Scott, "Commonwealth Principles," 612.

ambition, could be corrupted by power. Nonetheless, we must still retain our focus on the historical realities that intruded on poetical self-introspection and philosophical abstraction concerning the relationship between natural and political corruption. Disillusioned republicans had historical targets both in 1656 and during their experience with defeat after the Restoration; among them were the Protectorate constitution and the corruption of the republic's foreign policy -flaws and shortcomings that they personified in the fallen hero and failed saint, Oliver Cromwell.

Perhaps the case of Sir Henry Vane best illustrates this point. Estranged from Cromwell after the dissolution of the Rump, Vane entertained increasingly complex ideas regarding just commonwealth principles. His writings placed a decided emphasis on the nature of virtue and justice; of secondary concern were the constitutional structures where they would flourish best. In light of the massive amount of scholarship on Harrington and Milton, and the comparative dearth on Vane, we will examine his writings at length.

As early as 1654, the signs were clear to Vane that Cromwell's imperial pretensions at home had precipitated England's loss of providential favor. In retirement on his Kent estate, Vane studied current events against the texts of Biblical prophecy, and developed a theory of republican justice infused with a powerful sense of millennial urgency. In 1656, Vane published his book, *A Healing Question*, alongside Harrington's *Oceana*. Both stand as remarkable testaments to the practical Christian, classical, and humanist roots of English republicanism.

According to David Armitage,

Though *A Healing Question* is usually seen in the context of the dispute among the army, the people and the Protectorate about the direction of the good old

cause, its immediate aim was the exposing of Achan, and the healing of the wound made so manifest in the collapsing of the western design.²⁸

The book reveals that Vane saw his former friend Cromwell as a tool of the “self-interested” men on the Council of State, the Board of Trade, and the Major Generals who had hijacked the republic for their own power and corrupt financial gain. He sought unity in the face of the growing discord that had plagued England during its moment of crisis.

He asked in the preface to *A Healing Question*,

What possibility doth yet remain (all things considered) of reconciling and uniting the dissenting judgments of honest men within the three nations, who still pretend to agree in the spirit, justice, and reason of the same good cause, and what is the means to effect this?²⁹

Vane reflected at the outset on the providential favor that had guided the godly’s victory over absolute monarchy.

In the management of this war, it pleased God, the righteous Judge (who was appealed to in the controversy), so to bless the counsel and forces of the persons concerned and engaged in this cause, as in the end to make them absolute and complete conquerors over their common enemy; and by this means they had added unto the natural right which was in them before (and so declared by their representatives in Parliament assembled), the right of conquest, for the strengthening of their just claim to be governed by national councils, and successive representatives of their own election and setting up.³⁰

The natural right to resist tyranny legitimized the “conquest” of the “common enemy,” royal tyranny. In turn, victory over the King produced a commonwealth based upon the principles of popular sovereignty. For Vane, the “imperial moment” of the Western Design set the republic on a false course because corrupt factions within the government had appropriated the instruments of state power, namely the armed forces, for its own

²⁸ Armitage, “Languages of Empire,” 545. Despite the implications of the biblical allusion, which served as a Christian template for greed, Armitage limits his discussion to the Machiavellian heritage of Vane’s thought.

²⁹ Henry Vane, *A Healing Question* (London, 1656), 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

enrichment. This usurpation, in Vane's view, violated the sovereign power of the people and injured the public good.

But of late a great interruption having happened unto them in their former expectations, and, instead thereof, something rising up that seems rather accommodated to the private and selfish interest of a particular part (in comparison) than truly adequate to the common good and concern of the whole body engaged in this cause.³¹

Here, Vane contrasted the New Model Army's righteous conquest of absolute monarchy with the conquest of the Caribbean, which had been planned and executed on behalf of a "private and selfish interest of a particular part." Vane argued in the aftermath of the Western Design that this corruption ate through the nation like a cancer and corroded the common freedom of its citizens.

Vane saw that such backsliding from the principles of the Good Old Cause contained providential consequences.

Nay, if, instead of favouring and promoting the people's common good and welfare, self-interest and private gain should evidently appear to be the things we have aimed at all along...To do this is to take of the accursed thing, which (Josh., vii.) all Israel was said to do in the sin of Achan, and to have stolen and dissembled likewise, and put it among their own stuff.³²

God's blasting of the Western Design, in Vane's view, came as a judgment against the "self-interest" or ruling-class greed that motivated the expedition. Vane exposed the failure of the Caribbean expedition as the rotten fruit of the corrupt faction that, consumed by ambition, had used the sovereignty of the state to satisfy their own lust for power and profit. This corruption destroyed the unity of the godly and caused God to withdraw his favor from the nation. It also threatened to destroy common rights in the

³¹ Ibid., 5.

³² Ibid., 32-33.

commonwealth for which the devotees of the Good Old Cause had originally taken up arms.

According to Vane, “self-interest,” the very bane of commonwealth principles, had now become the “common enemy.” He told his former comrades to search their own hearts for the hidden origins of England’s troubles. Only then would “the dissenting parties...be safe from the danger of the common enemy, who is not out of work, though at present much out of sight and observation.”³³ Vane calculated his use of the phrase “common enemy” for effect. While planning the Western Design, Cromwell had claimed it would work to defeat the “common enemy” of Catholic Spain. He continued to define Spain as such in the midst of the popular fallout surrounding the expedition’s defeat.³⁴ Blinded by their zeal to defeat the alleged outward bondage of international Catholicism, the regime had overlooked its own carnal self-seeking. The godly had lost sight of the first task of reformation, subduing the inward bondage of lust through the self-governance of reason and virtue. Only after winning this victory could godly citizens direct their attention to the war on outward bondage. In exposing self-interest as the sin of Achan, Vane’s vision of the republic’s restoration was made manifest: to resuscitate the Good Old Cause by destroying the common enemy, the ambition and avarice of the men who ruled England. “Shall we need to look any farther for the accursed thing?”³⁵

Vane saw that the power of the common enemy had vested itself in the mercenary conquests of the Western Design, a project whose inequities magnified the injustices of the Protectorate’s repeated recourse to the sword to sustain its sovereignty. He explained that “military force alone” could never rightfully establish the equitable rule of law in a

³³ Ibid., 2.

³⁴ Firth, *Last Years of the Protectorate*, 1: 4.

³⁵ Vane, *A Healing Question*, 2.

republic.³⁶ Vane argued that the fate of the nation depended upon restoring the army to its republican self, which meant its unity with the people. How could this be accomplished? The first order of business would be to return the

natural right, which the whole party of honest men adhering to this cause are by success of their arms restored unto, fortified in, and may claim as their undeniable privilege, that righteously cannot be taken from them, nor they debarred from bringing into exercise.³⁷

Vane ultimately recommended a concrete solution to restore the commonwealth's legitimacy by holding free elections, putting the army under the control of Parliament rather than Cromwell and the Council of State, and establishing an independent executive. This would limit the "irresistible, absolute, and boundless power" that the military had acquired since 1649, although it would require the army's commanders to replace self-interest with the republican virtue of selfless service to the country.³⁸

Returning to the values that had first guided the Good Old Cause, Vane argued, would

not prove so difficult as other things that have been brought about in the late war, if the minds and spirits of all concerned were once well and duly prepared hereunto by a kindly work of self-denial and self-abasement."³⁹

But Vane also cautioned that the healing he proposed must eschew armed conflict within the godly party. This would only cultivate through violence the same self-interested ambition that had always disguised itself as public-spiritedness. Referring to the commanders of the army, Vane wrote,

In and with them, under God, stand the welfare and outward safety of the whole body; and to be enemies to them, or wish them hurt, were to do it to themselves; and by trying such conclusions, to play the game of the common enemy, to their utter ruin and destruction.⁴⁰

³⁶ Ibid., 7.

³⁷ Ibid., 9.

³⁸ Ibid., 21.

³⁹ Ibid., 45.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 25.

In this light, Vane argued that

the cause hath still the same goodness in it as ever...it is not less to be valued now, than when neither blood nor treasure were thought too dear to carry it on, and hold it up from sinking.⁴¹

Vane relied on the accumulated experience of those who “were more tried, more inured to danger and hardship, and more endeared to one another, by their various and great experiences” as veterans in the cause of soul and civil liberty.⁴² By bringing to light the value of these “various and great experiences,” Vane reflected on the hard years of the English Civil War, but perhaps also on the reformation projects that he led in America. Outward bondage, as Vane knew from his experience in New England and in the Long and Rump Parliaments, could creep into godly forms of government. The rise of arbitrary rule in the New Jerusalem of New England, as well as the deterioration of England’s Good Old Cause during the Interregnum offered positive proof.

By the growing light of these times, they have been taught and led forth in their experiences to look above and beyond the letter, form, and outward circumstances of government, into the inward reason and spirit thereof, herein only to fix and terminate, to the leaving behind all empty shadows that would obtrude themselves in the place of true freedom.⁴³

Experience taught Vane a different lesson than classical history had taught Harrington. Good government existed in the hearts of men, not in particular political forms, constitutions or laws. These were but “empty shadows;” “true freedom” lay in the “royal law” of practical Christianity. He prioritized this over political architecture, although at the same time he did not diminish the importance of a stronger republican constitution. In the end, though, Vane put his faith in the power of love.

⁴¹ Ibid., 3.

⁴² Ibid., 3.

⁴³ Ibid., 20.

Other radicals, while supporting Vane's condemnation of the Protectorate, would differ substantially with him over his disavowal of armed resistance. Soldiers and sailors expressed disgust with the current state of the republic's armed forces with less elegance but with greater clarity than Vane, Harrington, or Milton. They too had been taught by experience. Soldiers stationed at Huntingdon grumbled about marching up and down the country as the mercenary instruments of a military regime that enslaved its own people. Their reward, the men recognized, might very well be a one-way trip to the Barbados garrison.⁴⁴ On being asked what the army fought for, a soldier in a Fifth Monarchist congregation replied, "half-crowns."⁴⁵ A pamphlet distributed to the New Model Army garrison at Hull viewed the defeat of the Caribbean expedition as God's justice on a mercenary army, and went on to argue that soldiers could only be true to the revolution by disobeying their officers. This disaffection should hardly be surprising. As we have seen, New Model Army soldiers had long been the most forthright critics of the injuries that mercenary armies did to commonwealth liberty.

One of the most extraordinary and as yet unpublished statements of army radicalism may be found in a manuscript written by a New Model soldier before the fleet embarked for Hispaniola. The pamphlet's title, *The New Design Discovered*, most probably reflects an allusion to the secrecy that clouded the purpose and destination of the expedition that eventually became known as the Western Design.⁴⁶ The pamphlet is worth quoting in

⁴⁴ Bodleian Library, Carte Ms 74.39 fol.17.

⁴⁵ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 277.

⁴⁶ Bodleian Library, Rawl Ms A 24 fol.17-29. As far as I know, this work has never been cited in Interregnum scholarship, most probably because it was never published. It is likely that the agents of John Thurloe, Cromwell's secretary of state, intercepted it through the mail on its way from the army to London. I found it in the Bodleian library among the unpublished manuscripts of Thurloe's state papers. The quotations on the following five pages are drawn from this document, which did not contain page numbers. The soldier called his work, *The New Design Discovered {Layed up the 9th of March, 1655: An*

detail. In all likelihood, this soldier, an officer, was also a Leveller, and a passage reflecting on Cromwell's rise to power indicates he may have been present at the suppression of either the Ware or Burford mutinies.

I observed his Highness break all English laws...of which many died as traitors and some by his own hands, yet it was to his advantage, he declared an absolute arbitrary power over our estates and lives by this means.⁴⁷

Troubled in conscience for continuing to serve in an army that had seemingly deserted its revolutionary principles, the soldier then relates, "Sometimes I questioned whether I was bound to give some particular testimony of my faithfulness to the cause for which I took up arms."⁴⁸

He then recounts conversations with his comrades regarding their growing alienation toward the regime, and their lament over the loss of deliberative democracy in the army, a practice that the soldiers had come to regard as a customary right by the Putney Debates of November 1647. But with harsh capital disciplinary codes imposed on the army and navy in the build-up to the invasion and conquest of Ireland, "I found the case so allowed that it was mutiny, rebellion and death to consult with other officers, or to petition as formerly."⁴⁹ Mercenary conquest required the capital punishment of dissent and the destruction of the democratic institutions that New Model soldiers had embraced by the end of the Civil War. The soldiers claimed the right to petition their officers and Parliament through their liberties as freeborn Englishmen and through the "authority of their labor power," as James Holstun has noted. They saw themselves as armed workers laboring to build a republic, not hireling soldiers of fortune rented out to serve the designs

Examination of the Lawfulness of the Present Design of sending the English Armies Mercenary to fight or serve for Pay Only.

⁴⁷ Ibid., n.p.

⁴⁸ Ibid., n.p.

⁴⁹ Ibid., n.p.

of corrupt tyrants.⁵⁰ The English Revolution was fought for “common right and freedom,” whereas

a mercenary army in the commonwealth takes possession of the country’s riches and trade while the people maintain it...a mercenary army in any nation doth...dispose people to slavery, by degrees they render them ignorant.”

Through his own “great and various experiences,” as Henry Vane had it, the soldier drew the conclusion that mercenary armies were

a distinct opposite interest to the people’s interest. They share not equally in the common good or will of the people. The ruins and burdens of the people are their fortunes.⁵¹

The soldier identifies the suppression of the army’s democratic voice as the crucial turning point in its transformation into a mercenary army. He could no longer “take my countryman’s wages and money to enslave them” because “to be a mercenary soldier is a denial of God’s supreme right over all men’s lives.” Since man owed his life to “the mercy of God,” a mercenary soldier cheapened his own Christian liberty by selling his life for “a little money, and sell not only his own blood, but the blood of many innocent souls at the same price.” Here, most probably, he was reflecting on the bloodshed of the Irish Conquest, and the horrifying prospect that the Western Design held for thousands of other innocents. He continues to think on the relationship between mercenary armies, conquest, and liberty. To be

hired to destroy men for pay is repugnant to sanity and the social nature to that parity in life members and liberty which is to every man by nature, and could not without injustice have been injured by anybody.⁵²

In a republic,

civil laws and dominion had never been introduced to invade those natural rights

⁵⁰ Holstun, *Ehud’s Dagger*, 244-245.

⁵¹ *The New Design Discovered*, n.p.

⁵² *Ibid.*, n.p.

of men and destroy the possibility of sanity and nature...to do this only for hire.⁵³

Here, the soldier's thoughts on the nature and substance of true liberty become clear. By having his own customary liberties abrogated, the soldier recognizes that rights could not exist in the mere realm of custom, which could be stripped through law or force. If liberties were true liberties, if they had any consistency, any resilience, their application did not end at the border of a nation. True freedom could not be claimed as the exclusive property of any particular nation, nor could a nation invade another without the consent of its people for the alleged purpose of liberating them.

True freedom, in the soldier's view, required the individual to suppress self-interest if it came into conflict with the public good, which he defined in national and trans-national terms. Justice could not be defined through ill-defined imperial conquests in the name of republican and Protestant "glory." Here, liberty extended beyond the nationally exclusive "tradition of the free born Englishman," or the ideological monopoly on natural principles of justice claimed by republicanism itself. Liberty was a "natural right" for "all men," who were not all republicans. It also moved beyond another limiting concept, militant Protestantism's self-proclaimed obligation to liberate the world from Catholic "tyranny," which Cromwell had used to justify the invasion of Ireland and the Spanish Caribbean. Practical Christian convictions tested in the fire of experience across the Atlantic world revealed that since "God was no respecter of persons," all of humanity was entitled to civil and religious liberty by the common law of equity. Thus, the only possibility for creating an empire of liberty lay in the recognition of the first maxim of republican government: that the establishment of a government without the consent of the

⁵³ Ibid., n.p.

governed equaled tyranny –something Roger Williams first articulated during the earliest stages of colonization in New England.

At about the time the soldier wrote this tract, Henry Vane echoed his argument in a book entitled, *The Retired Man's Meditations*. It is interesting to note that while Vane contemplated and executed this work, he had invited Roger Williams to come live on his country estate.⁵⁴ Perhaps they discussed Williams' views on Native Americans, by which Vane might have measured his own New England experience with the Pequot and Narragansett peoples. He probably shared Williams' opposition to the enslavement and conquest of Native Americans, for it was during his stay with Vane that Williams presented a petition to Parliament opposing this Bay Colony practice. The petition, as we have seen, also asked Parliament to protect the religious freedom of Native Americans from the forced conversions pursued by the Massachusetts missionary, John Eliot.

As England's republican army pressed its own citizens, engaged in slave trading in Ireland and Barbados, and waged wars of conquest across the Caribbean, Vane, perhaps in collaboration with Williams, reflected in his *Meditations* on "the threefold kingdom of Christ," or the different "generations," "nations," or "sorts" that he believed were capable of achieving oneness with God. As the common "sons of Adam," men lived "in their several countries and local habitations," but each who lived peaceably under their own laws were equally entitled to, as their "inheritance," the "administration" of godly justice and the preservation of their "common right."⁵⁵ In a view astonishingly similar to Williams', he went on to explain that this doctrine of natural rights originated

⁵⁴ Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 200.

⁵⁵ Henry Vane, *The Retired Man's Meditations* (London, 1655), 126-128

in his realization, guided by “the spirit,” that Christ’s redeeming power dwelled in the souls of all men, Christian and “heathen” alike.⁵⁶

Here, perhaps Vane confronted the part he himself had played in the conquest of Ireland, justified largely through Protestant triumphalism over Catholic perfidy and savagery. He had borne witness to the godly justifications for conquest advanced earlier in New England by John Winthrop, and he saw them even more clearly now in Oliver Cromwell’s West Indian project. They had all believed at one time that the Elect’s covenant with God gave them dominion over heathens and the unregenerate in order that the saints might advance the onward march of the Reformation across the world. While Vane seemed to have questioned this regarding the Pequots, he expounded on these doubts more fully in *A Retired Man’s Meditations*. He wrote that although the Elect had a special place in the eyes of God, their covenant could only be sustained through a spirit consistent with “the royal law of Christ,” his commandment to universal love that respected all the sons of Adam equally. This challenged the legitimacy of conventional religious and racial conceptions of Protestant imperial dominion. Vane rejected these hierarchies of power, writing that

Men in their creation and births are made of one blood, all the nations of them, and so are equal, and cannot therefore be distinguished and fixed in such different conditions and capacities of Rulers and subjects.⁵⁷

In this segment of his *Meditations*, Vane, taking practical Christianity as the godly foundation of natural rights and the organizing principle of republican justice at home and abroad, was saying that the Elect could not exert rightful jurisdiction or dominion

⁵⁶ Ibid., 126-128.

⁵⁷ Vane, *Retired Man’s Meditations*, Chapter 24, 1.

over men of different “blood” or “nations” because they could not claim Christian election. He rejected, therefore, what was taken for granted by much of the godly community in London, Boston, and Barbados: defining one’s own godliness and sovereign dominion through the construction of inferior or treacherous racial and religious “others.” Here, conquest of the “uncivilized,” the “heathen,” the “savage,” the “papist,” the “negor,” and “ingone” were conflated with reformation and the progress of God’s kingdom. But for Vane and Williams, Pequots, Narragansetts, Irish Catholics, African “Mohammadens” and animists alike, were “equal” in their “common inheritance” of “natural rights” because the “light and life” of Christ made the men of all nations “one blood.”

In Vane’s own “great and varied experience,” he knew that the Western Design had been justified as a mission to save Indians from the “barbarous” Spanish and to convert them to Christianity. As a former MP and member of the Council of State, he also understood that the financiers, merchants, and excise men whispering in Cromwell’s ear lusted after the profits that would come through this venture, just as the commercial interests of the Bay Colony elite informed their depredations of the Pequots and Narragansetts. Furthermore, he knew as one who had rubbed shoulders at Whitehall with men like Martin Noell that Irish and African “heathens” would be imported as slaves to work England’s stolen land, just as they had been in New England. Vane’s writings in retirement may be likened to the anonymous soldier of the “New Design Discovered.” Both men felt that they must account for the reasons why they had taken up the struggle of revolution, and from their experiences, both concluded that the cause must remain consistent with universal and not customary, sectarian, or national principles of justice.

By 1656, many republicans in England shared Vane's disgust with the Western Design and what they viewed as the Protectorate's corruption of commonwealth liberty at home and abroad. General Ludlow considered the Western Design an oppressive exercise of tyrannical conquest.⁵⁸ "God is angry," wrote Robert Sedgwick, the former New Englander Cromwell had chosen to lead a relief expedition to Jamaica.⁵⁹ Robert Blackborne, a close friend of the ex-navy officer and Fifth Monarchist John Portman wrote that the Protectorate regime had corrupted the republic, damaged England's economy, and oppressed people at home and abroad. The regime had kept

down all parliaments to keep up boundless ambition, what necessity was there when the nation was almost exhausted by taxations, to spend 18/19k points in a fruitless expedition to Hispaniola, which they are again attempting notwithstanding the Arm of the Lord hath of late been apparently made bare against them in that business...does not war spring from want, which like an armed man is the herald or fore runner of innovations, surely they that will keep a people peaceable must not make them poor by oppression; we are apt with others wounds to salve our own.⁶⁰

Calling the expedition to the Caribbean "an enslaving design," Blackborne evoked Cato, the personification of republican purity measured against imperial greed and corruption.

Dear friend, were all our courtiers either Christians or Catos that would rather conquer for their country then for themselves; but ho, what he died to preserve they live to spoil, and prey upon the blood of a whole war; the price of widows prayers, and orphans tears proclaims their gain to be their godliness; oh, these are sad fruits of our fourteen years fighting! Poverty and oppression are very uncomfortable fruits of Reformation, but dominion impiously got, must be impiously kept, one sin must maintain another.⁶¹

Self-interested conquest had required the impressment of Englishmen whose lives had been lost "beyond the sea." The grief of those they left behind and the sin of slaughtering

⁵⁸ *To the Honest Soldiers of the Garrison of Hull* (1656), n.p.

⁵⁹ "Winthrop Papers," *Masachusetts Historical Society Collections*, 5th Series, 1: 381; Birch, ed., *Thurloe State Papers*, 4: 153. Also quoted in Kupperman, "Errand to the Indies," 97.

⁶⁰ Robert Blackborne, *Letter from a Christian Friend in the City to his Friend* (London, 1656), 7.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

innocents abroad marked the government's perversion of the Good Old Cause for which godly martyrs had sacrificed during the Civil War. Now, in the eyes of many English radicals, the reign of Oliver Cromwell culminated in the unholy resurrection of the spirit of Charles Stuart, a corrupt tyrant intoxicated by power. The Lord Protector's seemingly boundless ambition had made him, in the Biblical phrase oft-employed by Fifth Monarchists, "drunk on the blood of the saints."

The Fifth Monarchist Vavassor Powell of Wales, who worked with the returned Rhode Islander John Clarke to promote the Baptist gospel in western Britain, took pleasure in noting that the Protector boasted in 1654 that providence insured the future success of the Western Design, and that God would smite the dissident Fifth Monarchists for their "rantings and railings." To Powell, the Design's defeat proved God's desertion of Cromwell and his entire regime.⁶² Later in the century, Slingsby Bethel would call the expedition ill-conceived, "unjust," and "dishonest."⁶³ "Dr. Worth" in Ireland took note of a disastrous shipwreck of soldiers sent to reinforce the English garrison in Jamaica and remarked, "It is not enough to hear a good cause, if those who manage it continue to do evil."⁶⁴ In May of 1655, the Fifth Monarchist preacher John Rogers reminded Cromwell that God's providence and not Cromwell's leadership had "led them out from under monarchy." He went on to recall that Cromwell had broken the sixth commandment, "Thou Shall not Murder," by fighting an unjust war that "set up a particular interest and

⁶² Vavassor Powell, *Hypocrisie Unmasked* (London, 1655), 3. Powell appears to have made a satirical play on the title of Edward Winslow's tract that condemned Samuel Gorton as a Leveller. It is likely that Powell and Gorton knew each other from the time both had spent in the radical meetinghouses of the Coleman Street Ward.

⁶³ Slingsby Bethel, *The World's Mistake in Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1688).

⁶⁴ Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 80.

personal interest.”⁶⁵ Later in the sermon he accused Cromwell of adultery –the Lord Protector had strayed from the tenets of the Good Old Cause, “look(ing) upon pleasures and honours and profits and lusts after them.”⁶⁶

Marchmont Nedham, who had written at length about how republican glory would naturally follow in the wake of imperial expansion, tried to play both sides of the issue. While implicitly criticizing Cromwell’s growing power, he blasted the trans-Atlantic members of the Fifth Monarchy movement as extremists.⁶⁷ Nedham had seen Thomas Venner preach on Coleman Street and informed the Lord Protector of the Fifth Monarchist’s thundering condemnations of the General’s person and government. An anonymous Fifth Monarchist launched a bitter attack on Nedham for railing against Cromwell’s radical critics in order “to render them odious to the people... to cast dirt upon them.” The hostile author cautioned his readers that while Nedham wrote republican tracts, “the good Old Cause of Christ needs no liars to be employed to hold it up.” The same writer blasted Cromwell as the dupe of a merchant-class that used the state for its own economic gain.

It is observable that in all changes, not men of conscience...and standing of public good, have appeared for him, but such only as had a design to make use of him for the better carrying out of their corrupt interests.⁶⁸

It appeared to many that corruption had rendered the regime the plaything of a profit-driven cabal ensconced at Whitehall.

⁶⁵ Bodleian Library, Rawl Ms A 47.21.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ For a more positive treatment of Nedham, see Jonathan Scott, “Commonwealth Principles,” 603-607. It simply seems impossible to me, given Nedham’s employment as a writer for both Parliament and King, to discern where his sincere convictions lie. His critique of the Protectorate is also compromised by his service to the regime as a spy. Nonetheless, he did brilliantly articulate a republican philosophy and system of government.

⁶⁸ *A True Catalogue, or Account of the Several Places where Richard Cromwell was Declared Lord Protector* (London, 1659), 14-15.

Disaffection spread through the sects and the army. John Portman's congregation lamented the influence that "a company of salary and self-interested men" exercised on the government. Radical soldiers within the church, drawing from the army Declaration at Musselburgh, went on to give evidence that they were "not soldiers of fortune...and proclaim Christ to be our King by profession."⁶⁹ In June 1655, an army officer wrote from Huntingdon complaining about efforts to disrupt a campaign to enlist soldiers for a tour in the Caribbean.⁷⁰ Major General Whalley reported from Southampton that "Mr. Cole" was "a perfect leveler," and enjoyed the nickname of "Common Freedom." Cole waved a copy of the *Agreement of the People* in Whalley's face, and condemned the bloodshed of the Western Design as a betrayal of the principles of the English Revolution.⁷¹

An anonymous writer expounding Leveller principles agreed with Vane that home-grown corruption and tyranny, and not necessarily Catholic Spain, were "the common enemy." He wrote sympathetically of the "many fatherless, widows...weeping for their lost husbands and fathers in Jamaica," killed in an unjust war "begun and prosecuted upon private interest or fancies without advice or consent of the people in Parliament." The high-blown rhetoric of a Protestant-republican crusade of liberation could not obscure the mercenary character of the design. The author explained that "no man can compel another to be religious" by force or terror. He went on to say

⁶⁹ *The Old Leaven Purged Out...A True and Faithful Narrative of the Orderly Proceedings and Dealings of the Lesser Part of the Congregation formerly Walking with Mr. John Sympson* (London, 1658). This tract contains a closely detailed account of these proceedings, which as Bernard Capp recognized, gives us a rare insider's glimpse into the inner-workings of a radical sect during the Interregnum. See note 7 in the pamphlet for the quote.

⁷⁰ Bodleian Library, Carte Ms 74 fol. 39.

⁷¹ W. E. Leveson, "Goffe and Whalley," 5.9B (v.114) Cutter Catalogue of the Boston Athenaeum, 17.

that nothing is more destructive to true religion, nor of worse consequence to human society than the quarrels of nations or persons about their difference of faith and worship...histories will plentifully tell how pernicious (these) quarrels have been to mankind: an honest pen would tremble to relate the murders and massacres, the dreaded wars and confusions, and the ruins and desolations of countries...Surely babes in Christ and strong men, differ much in their apprehensions and comprehensions of the objects of faith; and much more those that are not yet born in Christ, though appointed unto regeneration, and it may be instructed like Cornelius in some things.⁷²

Cornelius, as the readers of this tract surely knew, was the gentile convert who moved Paul to proclaim that “God was no respecter of persons.”

Before we move on to explore how Thomas Venner and other trans-Atlantic radicals in the Coleman Street Ward began organizing opposition to the Protectorate in the wake of the Western Design, we will need to pause for a closer look at what they condemned as outward bondage. Most work on the Fifth Monarchists has focused on how they and their fellow travelers condemned Cromwell for breaking the army’s engagements. Their disgust with the Court of Triers and Parliament’s failure to reform the common law are also well documented. But if we look more deeply into some of the neglected aspects of the radicals’ grievances, we can see that despite John Pocock’s assertion that republicanism was “a language and not a program,” the rhetoric used by Fifth Monarchists was the language of political mobilization that addressed specific material grievances.⁷³ In other words, the Fifth Monarchists enlisted the language of practical Christianity to organize a republican political program. To discover how this praxis operated, I am specifically interested in what these radicals identified as “antichristian yokes” or “outward bondage.” Through this discussion, we can begin to

⁷² *The Leveller, Or the Principles and Maxims Concerning Government and Religion* (London, 1659), 13.

⁷³ Pocock, ed., *Works of James Harrington*, 15. I share this criticism of Pocock with Jonathan Scott. See his “Commonwealth Principles,” 593.

question how attitudes towards coerced, unfree labor as well as imperial conquest might have shaped radical republicanism's mid-seventeenth century, trans-Atlantic history.

Critiques of unfree labor emerged during this period in regard to the way that merchants and planters involved in the burgeoning cash-crop plantation economy of the Chesapeake and Caribbean addressed their desperate labor shortages. In contrast to the worldview of these capitalists, radicals did not view this merely as an economic problem; they condemned slave-trading and owning, the ruling-class solutions to labor scarcity, as another “sin of Achan,” one that they called “man-stealing.”

There is no simple way to define “man-stealing,” because people in the seventeenth-century Atlantic world applied the word and understood the phenomenon it described in a variety of ways. The moral crime of man-stealing encompassed the capture, sale, and possession of a person illegally deprived of their bodily freedom, inequities decried in 1 Timothy 1:10, and capital offenses in the Mosaic Code that many republicans, especially those who attended Fifth Monarchist meetings, viewed as a godly source of public-spirited law.⁷⁴ Ex-New Englanders Henry Vane, Thomas Venner, John Clarke, Wentworth Day, and William Aspinwall all looked to the Mosaic Code and its promise of jubilee to provide the practical Christian “pattern” for the legal system of the new republic. All of these men had heard John Cotton preach on the Mosaic Judicials in Boston, and while they differed from both the social elitism and comprehensive, Biblical literalism in Cotton's interpretation, they each saw that the principles of justice described

⁷⁴ The Mosaic injunction may be found in two passages, Exodus 21:16, “And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death,” and Deuteronomy 24: “If a man bee found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandize of him, or selleth him: then that thiefe shall die, and thou shalt put evill away from among you.” For applications of the Mosaic Code to radical republican legal reform, see William Aspinwall, *The Legislative Power* (London, 1656).

in the Mosaic Code would provide a way forward for the reform of the English common law.⁷⁵ Aspinwall wrote that Mosaic laws, fulfilled by Christ's commandments, were perfect, "and the best human laws were imperfect," while Vane recorded

since the spirit and original pattern of those very judicials is set up by Christ in men... we are to be using all endeavours, to come as near the primitive pattern and rule as we can, in our whole practice throughout.⁷⁶

In the eyes of radicals like Aspinwall, who notarized all commercial transactions in the port of Boston, including the sale of slaves, the Atlantic economy had called into being a host of innovations that ran against the spirit of practical Christianity, where "rich merchants...reared up trophies in their own honor." God's wrath would be visited upon them, to "the decay and obstruction of their foreign trade and shipping, their mirth and jollity be blasted."⁷⁷ Aspinwall, following the Mosaic Code, found man-stealing an abomination, and punishable by death.⁷⁸ Thomas Venner owned shares in ships while living in New England, and once considered moving to Bermuda. Both men were familiar with the commodities, commercial networks, and the moral inequities of the Atlantic economy. The tracts published by both of these former New Englanders explicitly called for the abolition of man-stealing as a sin against God and as a violation of common right.⁷⁹

After returning to London, Venner bore witness to the continuing growth of the sordid trade in coerced, unfree labor. As a resident of Katherine's Stairs on the Thames docks, Venner would have seen ship captains visiting riverside warehouses that served as depots for young indentured servants, forced "against their consciences" into bond-

⁷⁵ Ford, "Moses His Judicials," 282; Rosenmeier, "John Cotton on Usury," 556.

⁷⁶ Aspinwall, *Legislative Power*, 18; Vane, *Retired Man's Meditations*, 389.

⁷⁷ Aspinwall, *A Premonition*, 22.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷⁹ Thomas Venner(?), *A Door of Hope Opened* (London, 1660), 3.

slavery in the Americas. The captains knew that they could efficiently procure servants in these depots and re-sell them at a higher price in the New World. Once there, the captives could expect to be worked to death on a tobacco or sugar plantation.⁸⁰ A large number of these stolen beings were children. As ships left St. Katherine's dock for Virginia, Barbados, and other points across the Americas, Venner would have heard their parents, as one witness described, "crying and mourning" for their children's "redemption from slavery."⁸¹ These lessons in outward bondage, as we will see, did not escape Venner's attention. In proclaiming the Mosaic Code's provision against man-stealing, Venner, the Rhode Island abolitionist John Clarke, and other former New Englanders who worshipped together on Coleman Street, would position their republicanism against the expropriation of labor power upon which the expansion of the British empire depended.

The maritime state had a different view of how "man-stealing" figured in this dynamic economic process, a clash of views representative of the larger conflict between the political economy of early capitalism and the moral economy of practical Christianity. Far from an instrument of outward bondage, republican naval officials understood impressment as a traditional means to man the fleets that waged war and protected commerce on the high seas. Henry Vane had undertaken these initiatives as a naval commissioner during the English Civil War, but after the death of the King, he came to reject impressment on principle in favor of building a volunteer navy.⁸²

⁸⁰ B.S. Capp, "Thomas Venner," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary*, 3: 268; Bodleian Library, Rawl Ms A 49 fol.110. For the high mortality rates of indentured servants in the Chesapeake, see Edmund Morgan, *American Freedom, American Slavery* (London: W.W. Norton, 1975), 158-179.

⁸¹ William Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined* (1649), 47; Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 131.

⁸² Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 131.

Nonetheless, Vane still continued to call the press gangs into action when his reforms failed to meet the demand for naval labor. But for Vane and other trans-Atlantic republicans, the commonwealth principles by which they had come to define the “old cause” over the course and in the aftermath of the Civil War worked to transform their understanding of traditional forms of coerced, unfree labor.

Man-stealing could be “legal,” witness impressment and the Irish slave trade, or “illegal,” as in the case of kidnapping English servants and apprentices. Impressment rendered republican rhetoric concerning warrior patriotism on the battlefields and high seas rather hollow, but the dearth of military and naval labor made impressment a necessity if the commonwealth was to be one of ‘increase.’ The economic exigencies produced by the shortage of new world plantation labor also made the enforcement of laws against the illegal servant trade largely a pretense. David Harris Sacks has argued that regulations against man-stealing were passed in Bristol by merchants jealous of the profits that the black market trade in servants siphoned off from their own coffers.⁸³ “The welfare of the servants,” writes Sacks, “hardly seems to have been what was at issue.”⁸⁴ Far from a moral crime, aspiring capitalists regarded this servant trade as a source of profit, and with the resurgence of England’s imperial ambitions after the Civil War, this traffic in human lives entered a crucial take-off period midway through the Interregnum.⁸⁵ Antinomian “spiritists” and slave-catching “spirits” who prowled the docks of Britain and the highways of Ireland would measure and then define this

⁸³ See David Harris Sacks, *The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic Economy, 1450-1700* (Berkeley, 1991), 251-277 for an insightful discussion of radical religion, man-stealing, and state regulation of the Atlantic servant trade. Also helpful is Abbot Emerson Smith, *Colonists in Bondage, White Servitude and Convict Labor in America 1607-1776* (Gloucester, MA, 1967), 67-69.

⁸⁴ Sacks, *Widening Gate*, 255.

⁸⁵ For the social class background of “spirits,” or man-stealers, see Jeafferson, ed. *Middlesex County Records*, 3: 230, 233, 239, 253, 302, 315.

“progress” differently. This conflict marked a turning point in the contest to establish what constituted “property” rights during the mid-seventeenth century, when “property’s” economic and political meanings were being redefined through a trade in citizens organized by the Commonwealth’s ruling-class.

As they had in regard to the mercenary transformation of the New Model Army, many sectarian radicals from around the Atlantic world condemned the Protectorate’s perpetuation of the outward bondage of “poverty” and “slavery,” tyrannies to be overturned with as much determination as the rule of absolute monarchs, as William Walwyn had written in 1649, the year of the Republic’s birth. Hence, as the Fifth Monarchist John Rogers preached, the abolition of monarchy and slavery must form the “work of the age” for radicals bent on realizing a New Jerusalem in their lifetime. In this light, the sectarians looked ruefully upon the work of “spirits,” “trepanners,” or “kidnappers” as they were commonly called, who operated in port cities across Britain.

By the mid-1650s, as the Protectorate forced open the Caribbean for England’s economic expansion, this illegal commerce soared. The Bristol Register of 1654 reported the

many complaints...oftentimes made to the Major and Alderman of the inveigling and purloining, carrying and stealing away boys, maids and other persons and transporting them beyond the seas...without any knowledge or notice of the parents or others that have the care and oversight of them.⁸⁶

The spirit’s trade consisted of “inveighling” young men and women to join them in private homes, offices, or aboard ships with promises of food, alcohol, sex, or gainful

⁸⁶ Sacks, *Widening Gate*, 252.

employment.⁸⁷ Sometimes, if these enticements failed, spirits would resort to violence, physically incapacitating their victims until they had been delivered directly to a ship or a blackmarket depot.⁸⁸ In some cases, those brutalized by spirits stirred into consciousness aboard a ship that had already set sail for the Caribbean or Chesapeake. Most of the time, however, captains of ships bound for Barbados, Virginia, or other points in the New World would visit the dockside depots and select from the spirit's "stock" to purchase the young men and women as "indentured servants." Before setting sail, the captain might forge indenture papers to present to customs officials should questions arise over whether the servants had come aboard of their own volition. In many cases, bribes of cash and alcohol were all that curious customs officers required for official clearance. Barbados looms large in the court records as the most popular destination in the trade, although merchants and planters in Virginia and Jamaica also benefited, as did their counterparts in Suriname and the island of St. Kitts.⁸⁹ Once the ship arrived at its destination, and if the stolen person had survived, the ship's captain would present indenture papers to prospective buyers, and the "servant's" indenture time would be sold to a tobacco or sugar planter, with the captain clearing a substantial profit. In Virginia, under the headwright system, the captain was awarded fifty acres of land and a portion of tobacco,

⁸⁷ Jeafferson, ed., *Middlesex County Records*, 3: 230, 233, 239, 253, 302, 315. Jeafferson made a diligent search of the Middlesex County sessions files and jail delivery records to record, among other features of the legal system, capital punishment, spiriting, and conventicle transportation cases.

⁸⁸ Jeafferson, ed., *Middlesex County Records*, 3: 240.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 99-337; Sacks, *Widening Gate*, 251-277. For most of the seventeenth century, Virginia tobacco planters preferred cheaper indentured servants to the expensive purchase price of African slaves due to the high mortality rate and the low price of tobacco. According to Edmund Morgan, the Virginia planters found it difficult to quickly make up the costs incurred by the premature death of an African slave, where in contrast, indentured servants who died were more cheaply replaced. High profits in sugar made it easier for Caribbean planters to incur these costs. See Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 296-303.

usually a ton, for every servant sold. Farther south in the Caribbean, planters sometimes substituted payments of sugar.⁹⁰

Hillary McD. Beckles' exhaustive research on the methods by which British planters on Barbados acquired, disciplined, and profited from red, white, and black slave labor revealed the extent to which the spirit trade helped to ameliorate labor scarcity in the Atlantic economy. According to McD. Beckles, "A parliamentary ordinance of 1643 stated that there was hardly a ship leaving London for the West Indies which did not carry a cargo of these spirits. The ordinance provided that every ship leaving port was to be searched," but this act seems to have had little effect.⁹¹ Although he came before the King's Bench in 1670, a few years beyond the period under discussion here, the case of John Haverland helps illuminate how the system of stealing and selling servants worked, as well as the considerable economy of scale on which some spirits operated. Granted immunity by the court, Haverland related his knowledge of one particularly successful spirit, John Steward, who lived in Venner's neighborhood of Katherine's Stairs. Over the course of twelve years, Steward managed to provide five hundred servants, on a yearly average, for plantation labor in the West Indies. To acquire so many bodies, Steward started an extensive black market operation in which the spirits working under him earned twenty-five shillings per servant delivered, while Steward himself turned a tidy profit by selling them for forty shillings to interested sea captains.⁹² Other spirits could

⁹⁰ Jeafferson, ed., *Middlesex County Records*, 3: 336; Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 94, 171, 219.

⁹¹ McD. Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery*, 50.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 51; Vincent Harlow, *A History of Barbados, 1625-1685* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), 300

expect to make anywhere from three to one hundred pounds per servant if they delivered them directly to ship captains.⁹³

John Cordy Jeafferson's catalogue of the seventeenth-century Middlesex County criminal records contains long lists of spirits brought before London magistrates; many of them were caught plying their sordid trade in Venner's neighborhood, and many of them arrived in front of the justice of the peace bruised and battered by the rough treatment meted out to them by the London crowd. A petition from the Aldermen of London read:

usually for the supply of soldiers to divers parts and sending of men to the several plantations beyond the seas without lawful press, certain persons called "spirits" do inveigle and by lewd subtleties entice away youth against the consent of either of their parents, friends or masters, whereby oftentimes great tumults and uproars are raised within the city to the breach of the peace and the hazard of men's lives, being very dangerous...⁹⁴

From this account, the conventional understanding that only press gangs supplied soldiers and seamen might require an addendum. It seems as if "spirits" supplemented this stock of unfree labor. That these spirited "youth" were sent as "soldiers" to "diverse parts" suggests that spirit traffic in military labor was geared toward filling the ranks of forces occupying imperial outposts, indicating that colonial conquest increased the demand for unfree labor that ranged far beyond the plantation. In contrast to this neat solution to the capitalist dilemma of how best to maximize profit through the manipulation of labor supply and cost, perhaps nothing else could incur the rage and wrath of working people living on the docks like the discovery of a spirit at work. In September 1656, Rebecca Allen found herself facing down an angry mob on Tower Hill after Susan Jones "called

⁹³ Jeafferson, ed., *Middlesex County Records*, 99-37.

⁹⁴ CSPC 1661-1666, 220.

her a spirit” for attempting to sell her “beyond the seas.”⁹⁵ Given the location near his home, his fiery temper and his deep abhorrence of man-stealing, it would hardly be surprising to discover that Thomas Venner joined or even led the crowd moving against Jones or the many others that confronted spirits lurking on the docks. The grocer Jonas Antherson waded into another London crowd that had gathered menacingly around Nicholas Cooper, saying, “Thou art a spirit, thou has spirited a maid to the Barbados...and I will call thee a spirit, till those lost vindicate thyself.”⁹⁶ Sarah Sharpe confessed in May 1657 to putting “four persons aboard a ship” bound “for Barbados and Virginia.” One of these captives was eleven years old. Katherine Wall testified that Sharpe was “a common taker up of children, and a setter to betray young men and maidens to be conveyed into ships.” The “tearing and biting” of the children resisting their captivity had attracted the crowd’s attention to Sharpe’s attempted kidnapping.⁹⁷ Two years later in March, constables brought John Cole before the magistrate to answer for accusing Captain William Staffe of illegally trading in servants. Cole, a laborer from St. Giles, another neighborhood notorious for its depots of spirited servants, had incited the fury of the mob against Staffe, “in the street calling him spirit which is so infamous a name that many have been wounded to death, and the said captain is much beaten and bruised by the multitude...”⁹⁸

It could be argued that man-stealing in its various forms made working-class people in the British Isles more conscious of the suffering of unfree labourers around the world. The English directly encountered victims of the Atlantic slave trade who hailed

⁹⁵ Ibid., 254-255.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 259.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 259.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 278.

from Africa but had been brought to England by former Caribbean planters to work as domestic slaves. Court records reveal that indentured servants sympathized with the plight of these stolen Africans. In the spring of 1657, the authorities summoned the servant Thomas Lewes to the Guildhall to respond to charges that he had hidden “one Lawrence, a Blackamoor” from his master, “Matthew Babb, Gentleman,” a Barbados tobacco planter and slave dealer. It appears that Lewes had helped Lawrence, an enslaved African purchased by Babb in the Caribbean, to escape to freedom.⁹⁹

Salvador, Samuel, John, Juan, Plentherto and Anthony were enslaved Africans leased out as seamen by their owner, the Bermuda planter Anthony Penniston. They had run away after docking in Portsmouth, England, only to be sheltered from slave catchers for months by sympathetic locals, probably seamen. In London and Portsmouth, as in Rhode Island and the Caribbean, new encounters between the races did not always entail exploitation; sometimes they bred interracial solidarity against the oppression of outward bondage.¹⁰⁰ One may find glimpses of abolitionist thought in the epic literature of seventeenth century England, but the working-class crowds and plantation work-gangs of the Atlantic world can offer more vivid examples. As with Irish and African slaves in the Caribbean, working people in dockside neighborhoods experienced the economic crisis of New World labor scarcity not as a perplexing problem of political economy, but as a threat to the lives and freedom of their families.

In contrast, however, the conquest of the Caribbean and the acute labor shortage it produced prompted another creative ruling-class solution that kept a steady supply of

⁹⁹ Corporation of London Record Office, Sessions File 139: May 29, 1657.

¹⁰⁰ CSPC 1574-1660, 476; J.H. LeFroy, *Memorials of the Discovery and Early Settlement of the Bermudas or Somers Islands 1511-1687* (London, 1937), 2:177.

unfree workers flowing to the Americas up until the American Revolution: transporting prisoners to work as indentured servants on New World plantations.¹⁰¹ As we have seen, pressing Newgate convicts helped fill the ranks of Cromwell's 1654 expeditionary force, which captured Jamaica and provided new land for the expansion of the plantation economy. Despite the spirits haunting port cities, "hunting parties" in Ireland, and a Council of State order to re-charter the Guinea Company's monopoly of the African slave trade, the combined supply of English, Irish, Scottish, Indian, and African servants and slaves could not satisfy the demand for labor.¹⁰²

In England, a growing population, an upsurge in the enclosure of the commons, increasingly crowded cities, and the resultant poverty and crime that this lethal combination bred resulted in a decidedly different problem. Newgate, Bridewell, the Fleet, and the Comptor gaols overflowed with incarcerated people, as did many provincial English prisons that took in more poor thieves and vagrants with every session of the assizes. Many of these men and women received sentences of death for their crimes, although saints ranging from Oliver Cromwell to Thomas Venner found this form of capital punishment to be an odious offense against God. But Cromwell and the Council of State developed a solution between March and August 1656 that stood in stark contrast to proposals made by Venner and other radicals. Countless Leveller, Fifth Monarchist, and Quaker tracts proposed, in line with the Mosaic Judicials, that thieves

¹⁰¹ Peter Wilson Coldham, *Emigrants in Chains: A Social History of Forced Emigration to the Americas of Felons, Destitute Children, Political and Religious Non-Conformists, Vagabonds, Beggars and Other Undesirables 1607-1776* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1992), 49-50.

¹⁰² See CSPC 1574-1660, 389 for the Guinea Company. Sometimes the navy's impressment of seamen and the state's mobilization of unfree plantation labor came into conflict, exemplified in the case of Armiger Warner, who wanted eight hundred pounds indemnity because his ship and crew were pressed into service to reinforce the Caribbean garrisons. Warner had originally set sail in the spring of 1655 to transport one hundred Irish Tories to work in the tobacco fields of Virginia. See CSPC 1574-1660, 426.

should pay restitution, not forfeit their lives for their crimes.¹⁰³ The Protectorate regime, however, occupied with the business of administering its rapidly expanding Atlantic empire, found that these thieves and vagrants could be put to a more economical use. Additionally, the redistricting of England under the military rule of the major-generals provided an efficient infrastructure of “watchmen or spies to give over or apprehend such as were of desolute lives and conversations...who were more fit to be sent beyond the seas then to remain here.” Although Cromwell had expressed his outrage at the hanging of the poor for petty thievery, his practical Christianity, like Vane’s, was limited by the exigencies of empire-building. As the architects of a burgeoning empire during the Rump Parliament, both men ordered impressments on massive scales, while during the Protectorate, Cromwell advocated a policy that spared poor felons from the gibbet to make restitution as plantation labor, which frequently carried its own type of death sentence. Although the Irish Catholics had been subject to systematic transportation, along with prisoners of war and Royalist rebels, the new policy would legalize the transportation of tens of thousands of Protestant, “freeborn Englishmen.”¹⁰⁴

The Council of State justified its systematic deployment of the poor as bound labor by portraying England’s New World colonies as providential “blessings and deliverances...which called upon us to make some returns thereof, by endeavoring that after all our expense of blood and treasure the same might reap some fruits thereof.”¹⁰⁵ To accomplish this, the Council of State edict would redeem the deaths of pressed men in the Western Design by expropriating additional unfree labor to make its Caribbean sugar

¹⁰³ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 157-172; Hill, *English Bible*, 154-171.

¹⁰⁴ CSPC 1574-1660, 419, 421, 428.

¹⁰⁵ Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 65. CSPC 1574-1660, 447; Firth and Rait, eds., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, 2: 1262-1264.

and tobacco plantations more profitable. By June 1657, the Council of State would issue proclamations across the length and breadth of the country commanding provincial courts of assize to send lists of vagabonds, thieves, and other felons to Whitehall. This process streamlined the Protectorate's efforts to centralize the systematic exile of the poor "beyond the seas" to plantations in the West Indies and the American mainland.¹⁰⁶ The conflict here between the political economy of the state and the practical Christianity of the radical spiritists could not have been clearer. In allegedly atoning for the waste of life on Hispaniola, the regime enslaved the same class of people whom it had impressed for the Western Design. From the perspective of the saints attending Coleman Street conventicles, the Protectorate thus persisted in the same sinfulness that originally led the Lord to rebuke England.

The radicals, as we have seen, believed that the eradication of poverty represented an end of good commonwealth government; conversely, by enslaving vagabonds and petty thieves, the Protectorate ruling-class capitalized on the poverty of the very citizens whose common rights it had first neglected, and ultimately expropriated. In the millennial jubilee prophesized by so many of the radicals, prisoners would be released from captivity, not enslaved and worked to death for another's gain. Radicals recognized that the exploitive nature of bond slavery abused the Mosaic concept that thieves should be put to work to pay restitution for their crimes. Slavery itself was a crime, and far beyond making restitution for theft, it robbed the individual of their freedom. As the

¹⁰⁶ Coldham, *Emigrants in Chains*, 50; CSPC 1656-57, 324, 343; Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth*, 4: 33. This process seems to have already begun before the edict. See PRO C 66 2912/7 for a list of felons from Surrey sentenced to transportation "beyond the seas" in April 1656.

radicals saw it, the laws and policies of the imperial Protectorate regime amounted to theft on the grandest of scales.

In this respect, John Rogers, a Fifth Monarchist preacher who would later conspire with Thomas Venner on Coleman Street, drew an upside down picture of the Protectorate's depredations at home and abroad in the wake of the Western Design.

They are thieves and robbers that take away violently that which does not belong to them. We have great thieves, rich thieves, army thieves and clergy thieves. A poor pirate brought before Alexander the Great for robbing and being demanded the reason, the pirate answered him, this is the sole difference between you and me, you are a great thief and I am but a little one. Do violence to no man said John the Baptist to the soldiers, but our soldiers do violence to all men. What right have men in the throne to it? The Cavalier Party will say Charles Stuart has a right, but I say there's no man breathes has more right to it than the meanest child that walks the streets...They which detain what they have unjustly taken are thieves. They that make unlawful haste to be rich are robbers.¹⁰⁷

Rogers made an apt decision in choosing to use a pirate to explain the nexus between state violence, theft, and imperial expansion. The "cow-killers" shot by the English army on Jamaica were Spanish pirates spared from the gallows by Phillip III to serve against the English. For Rogers, the Protectorate's crimes were much bloodier; unlike pirates, thieves, and vagabonds, imperial governments and armies stole entire nations through conquest. In this sermon, Rogers evoked the wanton greed that gave rise to capitalist profitability in the Atlantic economy, while at the same time he articulated the grand hypocrisy of the Western Design –a conquest where the language of liberty and providence cloaked theft, plunder, and slavery. By highlighting this, Rogers condemned the Protectorate's means of expansion, which, in its "unlawful haste to be rich," did violence to the common law of equity.

¹⁰⁷Bodleian Library, Rawl Ms. A 47 fol.21.

This view of the Protectorate linked Rogers with unlikely figures across the Irish Sea like Blind Donogh O'Derrick, an Irish Tory who led a guerilla campaign against the New Model Army in Counties Kildare and Wicklow. Like Rogers, O'Derrick opposed Cromwell's imperial depredations as a form of theft, establishing common ground of the rarest kind between saints and Irish Catholic Tories. Over 50,000 Irish Catholics were either forced to flee Ireland or sold into slavery in the Chesapeake and West Indies. The Act for the Settlement of Ireland transplanted a significant portion of the remaining Catholic population, which endured the loss of over 500,000 lives during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, to the bleak outland of Connaught. As we have seen, this resettlement plan worked toward solving several of the British government's financial problems, particularly the payment of arrears to soldiers and profitable awards for the regime's financiers.¹⁰⁸ Secretary Thurloe reported on June 16, 1655 that as New Model Army soldiers received their lots for Irish lands, a new regiment of foot assembled for embarkation to the West Indies.¹⁰⁹ In addition to Irish land, a burgeoning slave trade organized by the Protectorate's financiers provided labor for private profit and the state's imperial expansion. Thus, the snares of English slave catchers in Ireland provided another source to resolve the perennial shortage of colonial labor, which the seizure of Jamaica had only exacerbated.

The merchants who engaged in the Irish slave trade incurred a shipment cost of 4.10 per person, although the ten to thirty-five pounds each captive fetched for sale in the

¹⁰⁸ Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 129-127; Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 40; Coward, *Cromwellian Protectorate*, 145-58, 27-28; Patrick J. Corish, "The Cromwellian Regime 1650-1660," in T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin, and F.J. Byrne, eds., *A New History of Early Modern Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976); McKenny, "The Seventeenth-Century Land Settlement in Ireland: Towards a Statistical Interpretation," in Ohlmeyer, ed., *Ireland from Independence to Occupation*, 186.

¹⁰⁹ Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 43.

Caribbean made this traffic exceptionally lucrative.¹¹⁰ A preponderance of Irish sold into West Indian slavery were women, tied together in yokes for their overland march to the ports of Youghall, Cork, Waterford, and Bantry. Cardinal Rinuccini, the papal envoy to Ireland, wrote to the Vatican that these women,

despoiled of their clothes, receiving instead tattered rags, flogged with rods and branded like sheep on their skin and flesh, were then driven among a crowd on board these infamous transportation ships.¹¹¹

These ships included the *Jane*, *Mary*, *Susan*, and *Elizabeth*, vessels that earlier had carried cargos of African slaves to the Caribbean. Martin Noell, leader in the Council of Trade, war-profiteer, African slave-trader, and Cromwell's advisor on Caribbean affairs emerged as a key figure in this business and built a large fortune from it. The Bristol merchant John Yeamans, who later became a wealthy sugar planter and slave owner on Barbados, also profited. Yeamans rose to such prominent prosperity that Charles II honored him with a baronet and the governor's chair of Carolina, partially, one suspects, for his ability to supply the colony with cheap labor.¹¹²

Tory resistance to the slave trade in Ireland increased proportionately with the new demand for slave labor produced by the Western Design. For instance, in April 1655 at Lackagh, a small town in County Kildare, Tories killed two New Model soldiers repairing the house of a Catholic family that they had evicted and transplanted to Connaught. The New Model responded by hanging four Tory leaders and delivering thirty-seven men and women from Lackagh into slavery in the Barbados.¹¹³ A month

¹¹⁰ O'Callaghan, *Hell or Barbados*, 86; McD. Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery*, 54.

¹¹¹ O'Callaghan, *Hell or Barbados*, 83.

¹¹² Ibid., 83-88; McD. Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery*, 54; Patrick McGrath, ed., *Merchants and Merchandise in Seventeenth-Century Bristol* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1955), 118.

¹¹³ Prendergast, *Cromwellian Settlement*, 338.

earlier in 1655, in the nearby village of Timolin, the Tory leader Donogh O'Derrick staged a raid on a party of William Petty's Down Survey.

Petty, a student of Thomas Hobbes and Samuel Hartlib, and a future member of the Royal Society, later became famous for his survey, which measured and assessed the profitability of Irish land confiscated from Catholics during the Protectorate. His pointed economic analysis helped him become one of the leading theorists of a "science" called "political arithmetic," an early pre-cursor to theories of "political economy" developed a century later. In *A Treaty of Taxes* (1662) and *A Political Anatomy of Ireland* (1691), he lucidly articulated his theory. He drew upon his experience in Ireland to discuss how capitalist innovations in newly conquered colonies could generate unrivalled wealth for England's Atlantic empire.¹¹⁴ Petty dissected with cold calculus both the added value of Irish land and the economic utility of enslaving rather than executing Irish Tories.

You value the people who have been destroyed in Ireland as slaves and negroes are usually rated, viz., at about 15 one with another; men being sold for 25, children for 5... Why should not insolvent thieves be punished with slavery rather than death. So as being slaves they may be forced to as much labour, and as cheap fare, as nature will endure, and thereby become as two men added to the commonwealth, and not as one taken away from it.¹¹⁵

Through the rough, leveling logic of political arithmetic, which reduced the worth of human beings to their value as economic commodities, Petty reckoned that the expropriated labor power of Irish Catholics would constitute the capital foundations on which England would build its Atlantic empire.

In Timolin, Kildare, political arithmetic clashed violently with the moral economy of Irish Tories who regarded the Down Survey party as "enslaving thieves." Eight of

¹¹⁴ For work on Petty, see Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 14-16; Rediker and Linebaugh, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 122-123, 146-147.

¹¹⁵ Rediker and Linebaugh, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 146-147.

Petty's Down Survey contingent "were surprised by Donogh O'Derrick, commonly called 'blind Donogh' ...and were by him and his party carried up the mountains of Wicklow into the woods, and there after a drumhead kind of court martial, executed by them as accessories to a gigantic scheme of ruthless robbery."¹¹⁶ The order from Dublin Castle in December 1655 for O'Derrick's arrest made clear that the Tory depredations in Kildare, and the trial and execution of Petty's men smacked of more than just "Wild Irish savagery" to the Protectorate authorities; these Tories personified organized, popular resistance to England's attempt to establish its Atlantic empire through the conquest and enslavement of Irish lands and people. These "barbaric murders," as the English called them, galvanized the determination of the imperial garrison to crush the Tory insurgency. Their "resolve" paralleled the logic of Petty's political arithmetic.

The officers are resolved to fill the gaols and to seize them: by which this bloody people will know that they are not degenerated from English principles; though I presume we shall be very tender of hanging any except leading men; yet we shall make no scruple of sending them to the West Indies, where they serve for planters, and help to plant the plantation of Jamaica that General Venables...hath reduced.¹¹⁷

This calculus of early capitalism, where the lucre of slavery cooled the blood lust for violent revenge, became policy in 1656 with the passage of the Act for the Attainder of the Rebels in Ireland.¹¹⁸

In Ireland, Irish Catholics and a few English sectarians found common cause against this traffic in human beings. Most notable among the Protestant resisters were the Quakers, who rejected the underlying logic of ruling-class political arithmetic. Preferring instead the substance of practical Christianity, they provided refuge, shelter, and

¹¹⁶ Prendergast, *Cromwellian Settlement*, 206, 336. Henry Cromwell, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, ordered all the inhabitants of Timolin transported to Connaught.

¹¹⁷ *Mercurius Politicus*, 4530; Prendergast, *Cromwellian Settlement*, 129.

¹¹⁸ Prendergast, *Cromwellian Settlement*, 326.

oftentimes means of escape for Irish Catholics fleeing the English army's slave patrols. For instance, John Grubb of Cashel helped Catholics hide "from the man-catchers."¹¹⁹ In 1655, John Perrot, "convinced" of Quakerism a year before by Edward Burroughs, miraculously obtained the release of one hundred and twenty Irish Catholics detained in Kilkenny awaiting shipment to Barbados. He later wrote that in relentlessly pursuing the local court to release the prisoners, he

represented the sore grievances and heavy oppressions of all thy children in the land, which none of them instigated me unto, but was only carried forth thereunto in the Mercies, Pities and Compassions that God had put in my soul, beholding them a bleeding people.¹²⁰

To the Protectorate government in Ireland, he proclaimed the following:

you have, and do in greedy and unrighteous manner heap up the treasures of the earth in our storehouses to the building and raising up of high walls of pride and arrogancy and nurturing of the lusts of your pampered flesh...It is come to pass, that no custom of your law, can cover or hide your inequity; but manifest are your abominations and the perfect shape of your subtle deceits are plainly seen, and all your cunning lies pretences cannot change the colour of your detestable practices.¹²¹

Perrot, a friend of the Coleman Street Quaker Isaac Pennington, Jr., also agitated against the Protectorate's sale of Irish lands to London speculators. To Perrot, this contradicted the very spirit and substance of the Good Old Cause. He wrote to the civil administration in Ireland,

the Almighty Searcher of all your hearts, and dark corners in secret, sees and beholds your loathsome abominations, and how many of you oftentimes enjoins as one in the destruction of your neighbors by overthrowing his just cause for your dishonest and unrighteous rewards and gain.¹²²

¹¹⁹ O'Callaghan, *Hell or Barbados*, 194-197

¹²⁰ John Perrot, *Battering Rams Against Rome* (London, 1661), 123-124. For Perrot's stormy, trans-Atlantic career, see James Carroll, *John Perrot, Early Quaker Schismatic* (London, 1971) After leaving Ireland, Perrot lived in Maryland, Virginia, and Barbados, and after journeying to Malta, visited Rome, where he ironically endured a year-long stay in a papal jail in Rome.

¹²¹ Perrot, *Battering Rams Against Rome*, 123-124.

¹²² Carroll, *John Perrot*, 14.

Perrot's gospel condemnation contained the same providential logic evident in God's punishment of Achan that Vane had used the same year to launch his prophetic blasts at the Western Design.

Court-martial accounts reveal that the Quaker contagion came to plague the New Model Army itself by 1656. "Convincements" to Quakerism rose steadily over 1655-1656, and by the end of this period, at least one hundred and forty of the New Model Quakers in Ireland had committed disciplinary infractions severe enough to warrant imprisonment. More research may establish exactly what their crimes were, and may perhaps reveal more examples of Quakers like John Grubb and John Perrot, who risked their lives to prevent the theft of others. Beyond speculation, however, lies the Protectorate regime's swift reaction to Quaker disruptions in Ireland. The combined threat of a Tory resurgence and Quaker radicalism prompted Oliver Cromwell to send his son Henry to discipline the ardently republican commander at Dublin, General Ludlow, who appeared to be too soft on Quakerism. Henry ordered the arrest of every Quaker in the Irish garrison.¹²³ Aside from obstructing the slave trade, Quakers demanded liberty of conscience, questioned orders when they conflicted with the laws of Christ, and refused hat honor to magistrates. For all of these offenses they were imprisoned, beaten, and flogged. *A Compendius View of Some Extraordinary Sufferings of the People Called Quakers...in the Kingdom of Ireland* (1656) and *A Narrative of the Cruel and Unjust*

¹²³ O'Callaghan, *Hell or Barbados*, 124.

Sufferings of the People of God in the Nation of Ireland called Quakers (1659) catalogue dozens and dozens of these cases.¹²⁴

Disaffection spread within the New Model from Ireland to the British mainland, particularly in Scotland, another Gaelic land where the Protectorate government secured unfree labor for the empire. The commander of the garrison at Inverness complained that, “Captain Leir...has turned a sottish Quaker,” and warned of the dangerous, political repercussions this would have in the army.

Your lordship may (detect?) the spirit and Leveling principle at the bottom, for the mention of the factious temper of the army at the time of the Levelers appeared ...their design is to draw soldiers from obedience...neither valuing the scriptures, ministry, magistracy, nor anything else that answereth not his humour.

He requested the transfer of Leir and Sergeant Johnson, another Quaker, to “prevent those blasphemous heretics from corrupting the soldiery...and take care that the discipline of the army be not inverted.”¹²⁵ Another officer bemoaned the conversion of Cornet Ward and Captain Hutton.

Capt Hutton is likewise a Quaker, also his cornet. I do assure your Lordship that a few of those inferior officers in a short time may infect the whole army, if care not be taken to prevent it...but as I am informed abroad is many of the private soldiers begin to stagger.¹²⁶

The anxiety of these commanders in Scotland and Ireland reflected their fear that the levelling spirit remaining in the army refused to be extinguished, and might experience a resurgence of sorts through the rise of Quakerism. This new combination of antinomianism and radical politics threatened to interrupt a profitable slave trade in

¹²⁴ For a wider view of sectarian disaffection in Ireland during the Protectorate, see Christopher Hill, “Seventeenth-Century Radicals in Ireland” in *A Nation of Change and Novelty: Radical Politics, Religion and Literature in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1990), 133-151.

¹²⁵ Bodleian Library, Rawl Ms A 49 fol.20.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

Ireland and undermined the discipline of the army as the Protectorate ruling-class refashioned it in its own imperial image. As one radical New Model Army soldier wrote of the Cromwellian regime, “it’s now clear the design...they joined with corrupt men to accomplish the ends of self-seeking men who have assured to themselves as much power as ever any king of England had.”¹²⁷

Parliament would deal as violently with Quakers in England as it had in Ireland, and nowhere was this clearer than in its treatment of James Naylor in 1656, who at that point rivaled George Fox as the movement’s leader. Earlier that year, Naylor symbolically portrayed Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem by riding through Bristol on an ass, with his followers proclaiming him as a “son of God.” Parliament’s savage punishment of Naylor, boring a hot poker through his tongue after whipping him through the streets of London, made him an icon of liberty of conscience. Cromwell, always an advocate of Protestant toleration, criticized Parliament for its violent persecution of Naylor.¹²⁸

The persecution of Quakers spread beyond the British Isles and across the Atlantic. New England experienced a wave of “convincements” in 1656, and the region soon found itself in the throes of another dispute, which like the Hutchinson controversy nearly twenty years before, tested the limits civil magistrates could place on liberty of conscience.¹²⁹ In England, George Fox convinced Mary Dyer, Anne Hutchinson’s close friend who accompanied her husband, John Clarke, and Roger Williams to London in

¹²⁷ Bodleian Library, Rawl Ms A 47 fol.30.

¹²⁸ Naylor received 312 lashes. Carroll, *John Perrot*, 107; Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 93. For a full account of Naylor’s trial and imprisonment, see *A True Narrative of the Examination, Tryall, and Sufferings of James Nayler in the Cities of London and Westminster, and his Deportment Under Them* (London, 1657). Naylor eventually died from his wounds.

¹²⁹ Horatio Rogers, *Mary Dyer of Rhode Island: The Quaker Martyr* (Providence, 1896), 2-6.

1652. Dyer returned to Rhode Island in 1656 with a slew of Friends in tow. Their repeated trips to the Bay Colony, which emulated Clarke's painful expedition to Lynn, would later provoke one of the most tragic episodes in early American religious history, Dyer's execution by hanging.¹³⁰ Barbados, where Mary Dyer first traveled before venturing back to New England, experienced the Quaker onslaught as well, and would soon become known among the Friends as "the nursery of truth."¹³¹ There, the group would have seen first hand the cruel and barbarous conditions under which Irish slaves labored, a testimony that perhaps played some role, through the steady stream of trans-Atlantic communication between the sect's members, in Quaker efforts to obstruct the Atlantic trade in Irish slaves.

In this chapter we have seen how republican radicals, through their practical Christian convictions, came to redefine Christian and English liberties as natural rights. This ideological transformation occurred through an evolution of intellectual contexts; but it also developed, in the words of Henry Vane, through the "great and varied experiences" of radicals across the Atlantic world. They came to define their concepts of liberty against the multiple forms of outward bondage institutionalized by the Protectorate ruling-class to realize its imperial ambitions at home, in Ireland, Scotland and in the Caribbean. They and their opponents within the republican fold recognized that impressment, mercenary conquest, land expropriation, and the enslavement of Scots, Irish, Indians, Africans, and the English poor fueled imperial expansion; radicals differed from their godly cohorts, however, and reconfigured what the Protectorate called imperial "glory" as tyranny. In the next chapter, we will see how trans-Atlantic radicals on

¹³⁰ George Bishop, *New England Judged By the Spirit of the Lord* (London, 1661).

¹³¹ Carroll, *John Perrot*, 67-71; John Perrot, *To the Upright in Heart, and Faithful People of God: Being and Epistle Written in Barbados the 3d. of the 9th Month, 1662* (London, 1662).

Coleman Street, in the aftermath of the Western Design, turned popular disaffection into concrete political organization. Thus we return in the last chapter to where we began in the introduction: Thomas Venner's rebellion in the streets of London.

CHAPTER SEVEN

“SOLDIERS IN THE LORD’S ARMY”: REPUBLICAN REVOLUTION IN LONDON, 1657-1661

With the King’s troops hard on his heels, William Parsons ran for his life through the crooked lanes of the Coleman Street Ward. As he flew through a shroud of smoke he threw away his halberd and scaled a small wall to escape his pursuers. Earlier that morning he had charged into battle alongside his captain, Thomas Venner, in a rising designed to overthrow the newly restored Charles II. After most of his comrades had been slain in desperate fighting in the streets of London, Parsons fled the scene in a state of panic. Now, seeking the safety of the crowd that lingered on the fringes of the action, he melted into the mass of people, wiped the sweat and blood from his face, and held his breath as the King’s soldiers scanned the assemblage for surviving rebels. At that moment, Parsons realized in the unlikely event that he survived the day, he would never be safe in England. With the defeat of the rebellion, all hope of reviving the Good Old Cause was lost. A week after his own brush with death, he watched soldiers drag Thomas Venner down Cheapside on a sled to meet the hangman in front of the old Fifth Monarchist meeting house on Swann Alley. There, Venner would be hung, drawn, his bowels burnt, and while still alive, quartered in front of a crowd of horrified supporters and jeering cavaliers. As the gruesome scene unfolded, Parsons remembered Venner’s descriptions of his old home New England, and resolved that he would start a new life for himself across the Atlantic in America.

I will argue in this chapter that while the Councils of State and Trade had used the political arithmetic of early capitalism to calculate the profitability of the Western Design, they miscalculated that their crusade against the “common enemy” of Catholic

Spain would unite the fragmented sections of England's republican community. Radical republicans witnessed and experienced the Caribbean expedition as a mercenary conquest that forged rather than broke the chains of antichristian, outward bondage. In late 1655, men like William Parsons would draw on this and other experiences with expropriation from around the Atlantic world as they organized against the Protectorate during its bid for imperial greatness in the west.

This chapter will pose new questions about the contributions trans-Atlantic saints made to the Cromwellian opposition. How did earlier encounters with outward bondage in America color their political convictions? Why did they conclude that the commonwealth's passage to soul and civil liberty had foundered on the rocks of ruling-class corruption and imperial ambition? Finally, how did the former followers of Anne Hutchinson help to organize the republican conspiracies against Oliver Cromwell (1657) and Charles II (1661)?

The state of the commonwealth, William Aspinwall wrote in late 1656, "stinks in the nostrils of all men."¹ While the Protectorate did retain powerful allies, large numbers of the godly and hundreds of thousands of Royalists, for different reasons, would have agreed with Aspinwall's assessment. In November 1656, viewing the country's "distracted" and "unsettled" condition, Parliament had tendered an offer of kingship to Cromwell in the *Humble Petition and Advice*. Although the Lord Protector thought that taking the crown might bring stability, he nonetheless agonized about how this would contradict the foundational tenets of the commonwealth. But many MPs considered monarchy the only tenable political solution to win the people's loyalty – a return to

¹ Bodleian Library Rawl Ms A 47.27.

tradition, it was hoped, would quell the chaos and unrest spreading through the countryside. But the Protectorate's political base, the Major-Generals, most New Model regiments, and important Independent ministers like John Owen, all opposed the possibility of a Cromwellian coronation. The major support for kingship came from MPs who, for the most part, wished to restore the ancient constitution, slow the pace of political reform, and clamp down on religious heterodoxy. In the end, probably fear of alienating his own political base compelled Cromwell to refuse the offer, although the official debate took many months and the Protector did accept the right to name his own successor.²

With the incessant tirades of the sects, bleak reports from the military governors, and troubling petitions pouring in from across the country, Cromwell certainly did not lack information about the commonwealth's distressed condition. In one petition, a man from Kent plead

that the sufferers of the cause of God may no longer despair of a just relief nor the widows and orphans cry for that bread which was the price of their husbands and parents blood.³

Sectarians relentlessly focused their animosity on the Protector. But a London servant who attended Fifth Monarchist meetings thought that Cromwell's growing unpopularity foreshadowed great things to come.

As the word of the Lord is true, so he will suddenly, suddenly, with the blasts of his mouth, overturn, overturn, overturn all those antichristian designs that are against the setting up of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus... it is no matter now, say they, we have the greatest man to be our Lord Protector, but it is cause of rejoicing to the saints because the Lord of hosts, he alone is their Lord Protector.⁴

² *A True Catalogue, or Account of the Several Places where Richard Cromwell was Declared Lord Protector* (London, 1659), 15; Hutton, *British Republic*, 74-76; Barnard, *Cromwellian Protectorate*, 59-63.

³ Bodleian Library Rawl Ms A 39.528.

⁴ Bodleian Library Rawl Ms A 47.27.

On Coleman Street, sectarians now regarded Cromwell as the de facto heir to Charles. The ex-New Englander Hanserd Knollys, along with Coleman Street preachers Henry Jessey and John Goodwin, organized a petition to persuade Cromwell not to accept kingship, a course of action that seems mild in comparison to the routes taken by Wentworth Day, Thomas Venner, and John Clarke.⁵

These Hutchinsonians became prominent figures in the Coleman Street sectarian world as they helped to organize the growing discontent with Cromwell. William Aspinwall published three tracts between 1654-1656. Writing in a 1656, Aspinwall posed these questions to the saints:

Are your rulers turned back and become apostates? Have they broken protestations, engagements and oaths? Are your deliverers become a snare to you, and are you in danger of being swallowed up by enemies at home and abroad?⁶

Decrying how the rule of law had fallen prey to the power of the sword, Aspinwall observed that

The mercenary soldiers of this age, cannot endure to hear of this kingdom or Fifth Monarchy, for then away goes swords and spears, and courts of guards, which is their livelihood.⁷

Along with pamphlets, ex-New Englanders recruited new members, organized petitions, and delivered fiery addresses in front of large crowds on Swann Alley, All Hallows, and Blackfriars to mobilize a political challenge to the regime. In a letter to the Fifth Monarchist John Carew mailed along with a secret package containing copies of *A Healing Question*, John Clarke reflected on the Western Design.

It is much on my heart to think and judge that the state of things are at this present upon the turning point...bear our clear, constant, faithful testimony against that

⁵ Firth, *Last Years of the Protectorate*, 1: 194.

⁶ Aspinwall, *Legislative Power*, 3, 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

self-seeking, imposing, oppressing, persecuting spirit that is in the world as that which directly tends to the casting out and throwing down the Kingdom of Antichrist.⁸

Clarke sent Carew copies of Vane's book to provide him with recruiting material for the Fifth Monarchist cause. Additionally, with his fellow Baptist, the Leveller Wentworth Day, Clarke had canvassed Fifth Monarchist cells in London and across England concerning the justice of taking up arms against the Protectorate. As we will see, these recruiting campaigns would bear fruit: by the spring of 1657, Coleman Street's sects had linked up with provincial cells in Norfolk, Portsmouth, Oxfordshire, in Devon, and across the West Country all the way to Wales.⁹ In December 1655, at a meeting of five hundred radicals in the Fifth Monarchist redoubt of All Hallows, London, Day read a proclamation calling Cromwell an "apostate" for breaking his engagements with the Levellers.¹⁰ During the same rally, Thomas Venner engaged in a fierce argument with the Welsh Fifth Monarchist Vavassor Powell. Venner exhorted the congregation to take direct action against the Protector. A witness noted that in the confrontation with Powell, Venner "pressed, and strained his voice with the utmost violence to overcome the outcries," building to "a half hours tumult."¹¹

Meeting with his own congregation shortly thereafter, Venner thundered that the people were "under so much reproach and suffering" that their "lives, estates and liberties are ready to be made a prey by the cruelest and wickedest..." He held his meetings in a rented room above a tavern in Swann Alley, down a twisting lane from Wentworth Day's conventicle. Day often made the short walk to attend these sessions, where Venner urged

⁸ B.R. White, "Two Letters from John Clarke," 146.

⁹ Richard Greaves, "John Clark: A Rhode Island Fifth Monarchist?" *Rhode Island History* 40 (1981). *Munster Paralleled in the Late Massacre Committed by the Fifth Monarchists* (London, 1661), 2-5.

¹⁰ Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 62.

¹¹ Burrage, "Fifth Monarchy Insurrections," 723.

“the true spiritual seed to Rise Up...and bind their kings in chains, and their nobles in fetters of iron...” This was a call to revolution issued from Coleman Street Ward by “the mean of no note,” a proclamation Venner’s congregation justified by Scripture and precedent. As they, wrote,

Christ was a tender plant, and a root from dry ground; so may his kingdom arise out of a poor, illiterate and obscure, and (such as the world calls) a fanatic people.¹²

The radical new direction that these ex-New Englanders forged for the Cromwellian opposition can be clearly explored in the break-up of the Fifth Monarchist congregation led by John Simpson, which disintegrated over the issue of armed rebellion. The carnage of the Western Design and the apparent move toward monarchy made it impossible for many Fifth Monarchists and Baptists on Coleman Street and elsewhere to maintain religious communion with their brethren in the Protectorate regime and navy, although for two decades they had managed to abide their differences in religious doctrine. The radicals within Simpson’s Fifth Monarchist congregation, which contained Particular Baptists, General Baptists, Socinians, and Seekers, wanted to completely break contact with all those in the meeting who, regardless of religious doctrine, had failed to disown their military or political connections with the Protectorate regime.¹³ By returning England to “rule by a single person,” and pursuing the mercenary transformation of the New Model Army, the radicals believed that the government’s “self-seeking men” had finally brought God’s curse down upon England with

¹² Thomas Venner, *A Door of Hope Opened* (London, 1661), 4.

¹³ William Walwyn’s wife was a member of Simpson’s sect, which raises the possibility that Walwyn himself might have been a part of the deliberations. See Walwyn’s *Just Defense*, n.p.

the wonderful blasting of that so much boasted of design to, and at Hispaniola though some vainly have said that the Lord was bound to carry on that design to manifest their integrity for Christ's interest; yet hath it hitherto been greatly dishonourable to this nation, and the loss of many thousands of lives by a few cow killers, and a great mortality there, and at Jamaica.¹⁴

The radicals in Simpson's church maintained that the regime's imperial ambitions had "impressed" the people without due cause.¹⁵ The army was a "Judas," the navy, a "traitor," "bought off with preferments."¹⁶ They cited the Declaration of Musselburg and proclaimed

having these things singly in our eye, namely the destruction of anti-christ and the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ...being persuaded monarchy was one of the 10 horns of the beast... We are not soldiers of fortune...and proclaim Christ to be our King by profession.¹⁷

By breaking this declaration, "which stared him in the face," Cromwell, "guilty of the highest treason... forfeits the right to rule..set[ting] the people free to take their best advantage to bring him to justice," which the militant members of Simpson's congregation intended to do.¹⁸ Many of the congregants were disgusted with the preacher, formerly one of Cromwell's fiercest critics. After his arrest and imprisonment for condemning the regime, Simpson acquired a more moderate tone soon after his release. Instead of preaching steadfast resistance, he now cautioned obedience to his flock. The saints must now pray rather than fight for redemption. The weak-willed minister, however, could do little to stem the militant tide sweeping over his congregation.

¹⁴ *Old Leaven*, 4 fnF.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5, 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, B.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, B.

The movement capitalized on this gathering momentum by calling for a mass meeting of sectarians at the funeral of the Fifth Monarchist, John Pendarves, at Abingdon, Oxfordshire. Although no plans for a rising as yet existed, the government feared another Leveller mutiny and dispatched eight troops of cavalry under Major General Bridges to disperse the radicals. Before the troopers rode into town, the assembly passed a resolution justifying armed resistance against the Protectorate, stating, “God’s people must be a bloody people (in an active sense).”¹⁹

Back in London, alongside Clarke and Day, the former naval officer John Portman helped lead the break-up of Simpson’s church and extended the radical organizational campaign to the disaffected seamen returning from Jamaica. Clarke and Day preached in Simpson’s church about the rightfulness of using force to resist the tyrannical regime governing England. In April 1656, as the congregation disintegrated, Portman began plotting a possible rising with Colonel Okey and Admiral Lawson, the Commonwealthsmen behind the 1654 impressment mutiny at Spithead.²⁰ By July 1656, Simpson’s opponents concluded that the broken “engagements of the army” had culminated in the “enslavement...and oppression of the bodies and consciences of the Lord’s people.” They judged that taking up arms against a tyrannical state was consistent with the laws of God, the only true source of authority for these antinomians.²¹ At this

¹⁹ B.R. White, “John Pendarves, Calvinistic Baptists, and Fifth Monarchists,” *Baptist Quarterly* 25 (1973), 225-265; William Hughes, *Munster and Abingdon* (Oxford, 1657), 88-89; Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 133; *A Declaration of Several Gathered Churches of Christ* (London, 1654); “The English Career of John Clarke,” *Baptist Quarterly* New Series 1 (1923), 368-72.

²⁰ Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 135, 276-278.

²¹ Greaves, “John Clark: A Rhode Island Fifth Monarchist?”

time, Portman's faction formally broke with their brethren in Simpson's church and joined the Coleman Street Ward conventicle of Thomas Venner.²²

There on Swann Alley, Venner and Portman led efforts to enlist members of John Rogers' meeting. Rogers himself attended meetings on Swann Alley led by Venner and Portman. After long, democratically-organized deliberations in the tavern-top, rented room, the congregation declared that "we did not live in an age to expect miracles; that Babylon cannot be destroyed ...by only faith and prayer; but you must be of courage...and proceed by force" to destroy the "yokes and bonds" of Anti-christ.²³ Calling themselves "soldiers in the army of the Lord," Coleman Street radicals had resolved to take direct action to advance "the coming reformation" that Milton had prophesized at the beginning of the revolution.²⁴

The "soldiers" joining Venner on Swann Alley hailed from mostly working-class, London backgrounds, but some like John Clarke had Oxford educations and had spent time in New England. From rough and ready mariners to polished Oxbridge scholars, many of the mixed-class radicals who rubbed shoulders in the Coleman Street underground had received their political educations around the Atlantic world, an important and as yet unexplored feature of Venner's conventicle that helps explain its extremism. There is evidence from lists of prisoners taken during Venner's two rebellions to suggest that other ex-New Englanders besides Wentworth Day and John Clarke joined the Swann Alley congregation. Philip Gura traced the former Ipswich, Massachusetts innkeeper John Baker to Coleman Street. Baker had become a troublesome mechanick preacher in the Bay Colony, and had been brought up on charges

²² Ibid., 135.

²³ Ibid., 135; Burrage, "Fifth Monarchy Insurrections," 729, 733.

²⁴ Venner, *A Door of Hope*, 3.

for making “abusive and opprobrious speeches” against the magistracy, for which the General Court “forbade him anymore publicly to preach in their jurisdiction.”²⁵ With his friend Samuel Gorton, John Green returned to England after wreaking havoc on New England’s court and clerics. Green had defended another ally, Roger Williams, in a letter to the General Court that had earlier imprisoned and fined Green for his antinomian teachings. These were so disruptive that several more staid brethren petitioned the court to have the colony “purged of his opinions.”²⁶ John Brown, another ex-New Englander, epitomized the Atlantic mobility that helped shape Coleman Street Ward radicalism. Travelling the Continent in his early years, he probably fought against the Spanish in Holland. He later joined the separatist church at Leyden, and then moved to its sister church in the Plymouth Colony. After spending some time in Rhode Island, Brown returned to London, became Henry Vane’s steward, and joined Venner’s Coleman Street congregation.²⁷ While not an ex-New Englander, Livewell Chapman attended Venner’s meetings and published the works of Venner, Aspinwall, Clarke, and Day. Chapman also printed Harrington’s *Oceana* (1656), a tract that as we will see, influenced Thomas Venner.

We know from the exhaustive research of Bernard Capp that Venner’s conventicle, like nearly all Fifth Monarchist gatherings, consisted of mostly small shopkeepers, casual laborers, and workers from the cloth and leather industries who lived

²⁵ Gura, *Sion’s Glory*, 141; Shurtleff, ed., *Records of Massachusetts*, 4: 160.

²⁶ *Winthrop’s Journal*, 1: 256; Shurtleff, ed., *Records of Massachusetts*, 1: 224. Green helped Gorton publicize Bay Colony intolerance in London during the height of the Leveller agitation of 1646-1647. Parliament awarded both safe passage through Massachusetts when they returned to New England, although Green could not stay put and returned to London at the establishment of the Republic.

²⁷ Charles Henry Pope, *The Pioneers of Massachusetts: A Descriptive List Drawn from Records of the Colonies, Towns and Churches, and other Contemporaneous Documents* (Baltimore: Reprinted by the Genealogical Publishing Co., 1965), 73.

and worked in impoverished areas like the back alleys of London's Coleman Street Ward. Capp's invaluable findings reveal that bakers, victuallers, cobblers, drapers, hat-makers, silk workers, scriveners, book-binders, and bag menders, among others, attended Fifth Monarchist meetings. New Model Army veterans like Wentworth Day and John James certainly came as well, and from Jeafferson's research in the Middlesex County records, it appears that a large contingent of seamen can be added to the list. Mariners, in fact, predominated in London's waterfront conventicles in the Stepney, Billingsgate, and Wapney districts, as well as in the meetings of other port cities like Bristol and Portsmouth.²⁸ They had experienced the "sin of Achan" first hand, in the press gang and through service in mercenary wars, and some in Venner's congregation had probably survived the bloody expedition to the Caribbean. When on shore, many seamen frequented the antinomian meetinghouses that abounded in the dockside neighborhoods of London where men like John Rogers, John Clarke, Wentworth Day, and Thomas Venner preached, and in at least the latter's case, also lived.

This was a dangerous combination during a dangerous time, and the Protectorate quickly recognized the subversive potential of the marriage between radical religion and a mutinous navy. Protectorate spies reported that "the very raff of Billingsgate" had joined the Fifth Monarchists, which was a derisive way to describe the poor, mostly seamen, small tradesmen, and unskilled laborers who lived on the London docks.²⁹ The Western Design had a particularly direct and severe impact on these sections of London,

²⁸ Jeafferson, ed., *Middlesex County Records*, 3: 337-41. Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 77; Rediker and Linebaugh, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 71-88; Sacks, *The Widening Gate*, Part III.

²⁹ This is how the gaoler of Lambeth prison described Rogers' visitors in February, 1654. See Bodleian Library Rawl Ms A 47.23.

for it was in places like this that the press gang and the spirits operated most frequently. Young men who lived in these places made up the mainstay of those who were pressed for duty in the Caribbean. Still other young men and women from these neighborhoods would be kidnapped and sold into slavery to meet the labor shortage that the campaign had created. John Rogers condemned Cromwell's part in this bloodshed and oppression

Because he hath oppressed and forsaken the poor. Because he hath violently taken away a house which he hath builded not...He that robbed us of the benefit of our tears and our blood...the blood of my poor husband, the widow will say. The blood of my poor father, the orphan will say. The blood of my poor friend, many will say.³⁰

Informed of this brewing discontent by Secretary of State John Thurloe's spies, Cromwell correctly anticipated that his enemies would concentrate recruiting efforts in these dockside neighborhoods.

In an effort to stem the tide of organized disaffection, the Lord Protector singled out Captain John Portman.³¹ The commander at Portsmouth received this urgent message from the Council of State:

His Highness fears that [Portman]...may take the opportunity of the return of the fleet to infuse evil principles into the seamen, desire you to apprehend such if you find them tampering with the sailors at Portsmouth, secure them, and send a speedy account to Council.³²

Portman certainly was a dangerous man, for his intrigues with the disaffected seamen at Portsmouth occurred while he served as a liaison between Venner's congregation and the Commonwealthsmen, who had begun a series of talks to launch a rebellion aimed at overthrowing the Protectorate.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 258-259.

³² CSPD 1656-1657, 149. Parentheses mine.

The factions Portman helped to unite in the growing plotting against Cromwell encompassed the entire spectrum of Interregnum republicanism. Among them were the Commonwealthmen, a disparate collection of MPs, former Levellers, and New Model Army officers including Admiral John Lawson, Colonel John Okey, Edward Sexby, and John Wildman. Henry Vane's work established an ideological bridge between Commonwealthmen and Fifth Monarchists.³³ It should not surprise us, however, that men of Vane's stature had turned against the Protectorate. As we have seen before, Admiral Lawson, General Harrison, and General Overton were hatching plots against the regime in conjunction with Levellers as early as October 1654. While Overton had been a Leveller, Lawson and Harrison were often associated with the Fifth Monarchy movement, as were other prominent figures such as MPs Hugh Courtney and Colonel Robert Bennett, who had also served on the Council of State. It is very likely that the Leveller Edward Sexby became involved in the plotting. While exiled in France, Sexby wrote perhaps the most famous pamphlet of the Interregnum, *Killing Noe Murder*, a classic exposition of republican theory that advocated tyrannicide against Cromwell.³⁴ John Sturgeon, as a member of Cromwell's lifeguard, was a key source of information for Sexby. Sturgeon was arrested in London in 1656 carrying a bale of 1500 copies of *Killing Noe Murder* that he tried to smuggle into England from Holland.³⁵ When accosted by Thurloe's spies at the dock, he was climbing Katherine's stairs with Edward

³³ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 114; Birch, ed., *Thurloe Papers*, 5: 197.

³⁴ Edward Sexby, *Killing Noe Murder* (London, 1656). For the best new work on Sexby, see James Holstun's chapter "Forlorn Hope: Edward Sexby and the Republic," *Ehud's Dagger*, 305-366.

³⁵ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 118.

Wroughton, a member of Venner's congregation. Perhaps they were delivering this incendiary work to Venner himself, who lived only a few steps away.³⁶

Republican opposition to Cromwell therefore ran a wide gamut, from Commonwealthmen, Fifth Monarchists, Baptists, Quakers, and former Levellers, all of whom had connections in the army, navy, Parliament, and Council of State, in addition to London's usual sectarian haunts in Coleman Street Ward, Wapping, Shoreditch, Billingsgate, Tower Hill, and St. Katherine's. The radicals had diverse social origins and religious convictions, but in the wake of the Western Design, they initiated plans to unite around what they had begun to call "the Good Old Cause" that had inspired them to wage war in order to establish a more just commonwealth.³⁷

By the summer of 1656, Thomas Venner and his followers in Swann Alley had concluded that the time for pamphlets and speeches had passed and the time for organization and action had come. In the midst of the summer's excitement surrounding the Second Protectorate Parliament elections, Fifth Monarchists met in London to discuss two questions: the first, "when the time was for destroying and pulling down Babylon and its adherents," with the second being, "what are the means for doing it?" The meeting "concluded the time to be now, and the means by the sword."³⁸ Despite their haste, the radical sectarians realized that an armed revolt could be accomplished more readily with

³⁶ Holstun, *Ehud's Dagger*, 331.

³⁷ There were many "Good Old Causes" which could not possibly be reconciled to one another. For instance, it would be impossible to say that Thomas Venner and the monarchy-friendly, former Rumper Arthur Haselrige, both advocates of the "Good Old Cause," could have agreed on a constitutional resolution to the country's political impasse. What all those who appealed to the Good Old Cause shared was a desire to restore the government to the principles for which men took up arms in 1642. These were, however, as disparate as the political and religious principles entertained by Cromwell's manifold critics.

³⁸ Firth, *Last Years of the Protectorate*, 209; Birch, ed., *Thurloe Papers*, 4: 197.

the aid of powerful figures who had been engaged in different plots against Cromwell over the preceding three years.

John Portman, who moved freely between the circles of high-ranking MPs, generals, and admirals as well as the working-class sectarian circles of the Fifth Monarchist movement, emerged as a key organizer. Portman helped to bring the Commonwealthmen, represented by Colonel Okey and Admiral Lawson, together with a Fifth Monarchist contingent led by Venner and Arthur Squibb, a former member of Simpson's congregation.³⁹ Their discussions focused on Henry Vane's book, *A Healing Question*. The plotters believed that the former colonial governor's work might serve as a template for the godly government that would rise on the ashes of the Protectorate. Thurloe later recorded that while *A Healing Question* provided the plotters with a working system of republican government, the tract had not yet been published, indicating that Vane had made his work available for the benefit of the plotters, possibly through his steward, the former New Englander John Brown, who frequented Venner's meetings on Swann Alley.⁴⁰

Although promising at the outset, nothing came of this potential alliance of disgruntled republicans. The purpose of their collaboration had been "to reconcile each other's principles, that they might act jointly." Both parties had committed themselves to an armed uprising, and although they agreed that *A Healing Question* contained the substance of republican justice, they disagreed on the type of institution that could best shape the substance of justice into political form. The Commonwealthmen held out for reconvening the forty members of the Rump Parliament, a tactic that Vane himself

³⁹ Ashley, *John Wildman*, 84; "John Lawson," *D.N.B.*, 735-737.

⁴⁰ Firth, *Last Years of the Protectorate*, 1: 207-217.

seemed inclined to favor. The Fifth Monarchists plotters not unreasonably distrusted the members of this body, and approved more directly of the religious radicalism of the Barebones Assembly.⁴¹ The plotters eventually went their separate ways, although Thurloe's spies were hot on their trail. Venner escaped the dragnet, but Portman, Lawson and Okey were arrested, along with Henry Vane.⁴² In a warrant Cromwell later issued for John Portman's arrest, soldiers were ordered to "break open any doors, locks, bars or bolts" to apprehend this dangerous character, who would "disturb the public peace, raise seditions and commotions" that sought "to disaffect and exasperate the hearts and spirits of persons."⁴³ Cromwell's fear of Portman's subversive influence on the navy indicates his recognition that resistance to impressment was directly linked in 1656, as it was in 1647, 1649, and 1654, to radical republican critiques of his power.⁴⁴

Now alone in the projected rising, Venner's rebels proceeded undeterred. Late in 1656, the group organized into five cells in and around London, each with a commission of twenty-five men, although to prevent informers from giving the plot away, the cells were kept in the dark about the personnel and location of their confederates.⁴⁵ Venner also attempted to recruit allies from across southern England and Wales, and succeeded in forging a direct link with a large band of rebels in Norfolk.⁴⁶ The plotters held weekly sessions at the meetinghouse on Swann Alley, where, as Secretary Thurloe later reported, "mean fellows of no-note" "had blown up one another" in incendiary invectives hurled at

⁴¹ Birch, ed., *Thurloe Papers*, 5: 184-187; Firth, *Last Years of the Protectorate*, 1: 209-210; Rogers, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 72-73.

⁴² Rogers, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 72-73.

⁴³ Bodleian Library Rawl Ms A 57.253.

⁴⁴ Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 258-259; Bodleian Library Rawlinson Ms A57.191

John Portman, along with John Rogers, was caught up in the dragnet of radical republican suspects after Venner's failed April 1657 rebellion. Portman would go on to spend several months in prison with Venner in the Tower of London.

⁴⁵ Birch, ed., *Thurloe Papers*, 5: 187; Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 105.

⁴⁶ CSPD 1657, 825-826; Burrage, "Fifth Monarchy Insurrections," 725.

the Protector and “the distracted condition” of the country. Venner also seems to have held meetings at his house on Katherine’s Lane near the Thames.⁴⁷ The planning sessions were tense, with different members of the cell nearly coming to blows about the projected timing of the rising. “Groans...tears...and much unsavory passion” filled the meetinghouse, and several key members such as Christopher Feake, John Rogers, and Livewell Chapman drifted away, worried that the plot had no chance for success.⁴⁸ Venner’s Fifth Monarchist supporters persevered in the face of the rising’s diminishing momentum, and reached out to Wentworth Day’s congregation for additional support, which was forthcoming. In late March, the remaining members elected a committee of ten that separated the volunteers into three military companies.

These men knew something about fighting, as many had served in the New Model Army and Navy and the Bay Colony militia, and according to their experiences in these units, they organized themselves through a democratic process. Each company elected a Captain of the Front, Captain of the Rear, and an Ensign bearer. The men selected the returned New Englander John Green as one of the line officers.⁴⁹ Venner was unsurprisingly selected by the band as “Chief Captain” of the combined forces in deliberations that lasted until the small hours of the early spring morning.⁵⁰ The next task lay in acquiring weapons. Trunks of pistols, muskets, swords, shot, powder, halberds, helmets, spy glasses, armor, and mail were acquired and deposited for safekeeping at

⁴⁷ Birch, ed., *Thurloe Papers*, 5: 187; Burrage, “Thomas Venner,” 725.

⁴⁸ Burrage, “Fifth Monarchy Insurrections,” 727.

⁴⁹ Burrage, “Fifth Monarchy Insurrections,” 727.

⁵⁰ Birch, ed., *Thurloe Papers*, 5: 187.

safehouses on Swann Alley, Mile End Green, and Shoreditch.⁵¹ Women in the congregation also participated in the planning and execution of the revolt, storing arms, hosting meetings, and distributing the manifesto written to coincide with the revolt. A “Sister Kerwith” seems to have been deputed as the leader of this enterprise.⁵² As the day for the rising drew closer, more arms and munitions were buried in Epping Forest. Venner’s officers scouted this location for its proximity to the roads leading to Suffolk and Norfolk; it made for a strategic location that might ensure the success of the rebellion outside of London, “because Christians of their spirit were plentiful” there. The officers also realized that the Fifth Monarchists of Norfolk and Suffolk not yet enlisted in the plot might make ready volunteers, because large swathes of their “country” had recently been “enclosed, and so most fit for our purpose.”⁵³ The common experience of expropriation, the rebels hoped, would provide a revolutionary bond between Londoners and their potential recruits in provincial southeastern England.

The rebels printed a manifesto for the rising called, *A Standard Set Up*, which they “scattered up and down the streets” of London.⁵⁴ *A Standard* outlined a Leveller-styled republic that devolved state power to local governments who would elect representatives, through a non-propertied popular franchise, to national parliaments that convened annually.⁵⁵ These elected representatives would rule “without respect to

⁵¹ Baker, *Chronicle of the Kings of England*, 629; Birch, ed., *Thurloe Papers*, 5: 186; Burrage, “Fifth Monarchy Insurrections,” 734; British Library ADD MSS 4459, 111-112.

⁵² Birch, ed., *Thurloe Papers*, 5: 186.

⁵³ Rogers, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 85; Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 118; Firth, *Last Years of the Protectorate*, 218.

⁵⁴ CSPD 1656-1657, 149. For the organization of Fifth Monarchist cells, see Birch, ed., *Thurloe Papers*, 5: 184-87.

⁵⁵ *A Standard*, Part 13.

persons,” with “no rank degree or quality whatsoever privileged by law.” Venner’s rebels defined this commonwealth against the centralized, military dictatorship of the Protectorate regime. According to the rebels, the “junta” that Cromwell presided over had produced a new ruling-class in England. “Degenerate” and “burdensome,” the rebels believed that the Protectorate had wielded its power for the “enrichment and corruption of particular persons.”⁵⁶ The document cited the Leveller engagements of the Civil War, including the “Large Petition” to Parliament that had been originally organized on Coleman Street, as well as the Triploe Heath proclamation. This amounted to a condemnation of Cromwell’s use of the republic’s armed forces in the Caribbean and Ireland, as well as the heavy taxes required to sustain such a large standing army. Cromwell, therefore, must be overthrown and a “free state established,”

So that now the bowels of the poore, the needy, the afflicted, the languishing, the thirsty souls, the oppressed and almost devoured people, shall all be refreshed, revived by the constant administration of justice, the sweet current of judgement and streams of righteousness, that shall flow down over unto their bosoms and wounds, from this foundation and spirit of the law.⁵⁷

The means by which the Protectorate oppressed its citizens were systematically addressed. Enclosure, impressment, mercenary armies, excise taxes, and tithes were all condemned as “anti-Christian yokes.”⁵⁸ Lest their rebellion be mistaken for a design of religious fanatics who wished to set up a narrow sectarian base of power, the rebels quoted the Book of Revelation and declared, “There is also under this banner ...protection...for all civil and honest men ...all the saints may all come to the

⁵⁶ Ibid., Parts 13 and 20.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 15.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Part 20.

banner...that judgment being returned to righteousness the standard set-up, and some beginning, lead all the upright.”⁵⁹

The rebels set the rising for April 9, 1657. Each company received orders to rendezvous at Mile End Green, and from there the combined units would proceed to Epping Forrest, pick up more arms, and march northward to join additional members of the force in Norfolk.⁶⁰ Despite Venner’s precautions, Thurloe had already been alerted to the projected insurrection, perhaps through information provided by a “Brother Spencer” who deserted the rebels as they finalized their plans.⁶¹ On the evening of the seventh, Venner and twenty armed men were arrested at Mile End Green. The men were bearing the emblem of the rising, a red lion sleeping in a silver field with the motto, “Who Shall Rouse Him Up” emblazoned across the top of the banner.⁶² Soldiers of the Protectorate captured a second contingent at Shoreditch as they prepared to ride out to Mile End Green.⁶³ They surprised a third company, numbering about sixty “well-armed and well-horsed” in Epping Forest and easily subdued them after a short skirmish.⁶⁴ Searching the houses and meeting places of Fifth Monarchists in London, soldiers found six trunks and four chests of arms in Swann Alley. They arrested Colonel Okey, Admiral Lawson, General Harrison, and John Carew as suspects, but quickly released them.⁶⁵

Thomas Venner could not expect the same treatment. After his arrest, he received a meeting with Cromwell and proceeded to launch a stream of invectives and abuse at the Protector so profane that he scandalized by-standers. Venner, along with his son-in-law,

⁵⁹ Ibid., Part 10, Part 25.

⁶⁰ Firth, *Last Years of the Protectorate*, 1: 219; *Mercurius Politicus*, April 9-16, 7726.

⁶¹ British Library ADD MS 4459, 111-112; Burrage, “Fifth Monarchy Insurrections,” 727.

⁶² Firth, ed., *Clarke Papers*, 3: 105; Firth, *Last Years of the Protectorate*, 1: 217.

⁶³ Baker, *Chronicle of the Kings of England*, 629.

⁶⁴ Firth, *Last Years of the Protectorate*, 1: 218.

⁶⁵ CSPD 1657, 825-826.

William Medley, and another plotter, Richard Martyn, were then locked away for two years in the Tower of London. From his place of captivity, the wine cooper could see his house in Katherine's Lane, hard by the River Thames.⁶⁶ New Englanders would soon hear of the exploits of their former countrymen among the Fifth Monarchist rebels. William Hooke, a former Bay Colony minister who returned to England wrote John Winthrop, Jr, the Governor of New Haven, with the news.

The conspiracy...was carried on by tumultuous, outrageous discontented men, pretending to fifth monarchy...In this design, one Venner, not long since dwelling in your Boston, a wine cooper, is a principal actor, who, being brought before the protector, spoke and behaved himself with as great impudence, insolence pride and railing as (I think) you ever heard.⁶⁷

A year later, close to the anniversary of the rising, John Clarke and Wentworth Day were arrested on Swann Alley, "a public place where the saints have met for many years," to listen to John Canne discourse against Cromwell. On trial, both Clarke and Day refused their judges "hat honor," something Clarke had done before when facing New England judges. Calling Cromwell a "juggler," or political trickster, Day demanded in a fit of rage that the Protector "be sawn in pieces!" This outburst may have caused Cromwell to remember Day from their encounter at Corkbrush field in 1649. Clarke was no milder, and both radicals received prison sentences, Clarke for six months and Day for a year.⁶⁸

Oliver Cromwell died late in 1658. His reign had been a troubled one. He had managed to alienate almost every constituency within his political base, although given

⁶⁶ Bodleian Library, Rawl Ms A 49 fol.110. This information comes from the deposition of William Ashton, a silk weaver, and probably one of Thurloe's informants.

⁶⁷ Charles Banks, "Thomas Venner: The Boston Wine-Cooper and Fifth Monarchy Man," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 47 (1893), 437-444.

⁶⁸ Rogers, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 91-95.

that these factions ranged from Fifth Monarchists to disenchanted Rumpers, it's difficult to see how Cromwell could have united them. Invariably, when he favored one faction he alienated others, witness Henry Vane's sense of betrayal when Cromwell dissolved the Rump, while William Aspinwall hailed the general as a Moses in the aftermath of the purge. From his early days as a cavalry commander and Long Parliament MP, Cromwell championed religious toleration. He continued to do so as Lord Protector, most strikingly in his horror at the harsh punishment meted out to James Naylor. This proved to be a thankless task, for the dissolution of the Nominated Assembly destroyed his sectarian support, and the sects whose liberty of conscience he protected became, next to Royalists, the most seditious section in Interregnum England. He had intended to unite all the godly by waging war against the "common enemy," Spain, but the disastrous results of the campaign only heightened his own unpopularity. Cromwell's death did not, unsurprisingly, unite opponents around a new leader, constitution, or religious settlement. Rather, it opened up a chaotic vacuum of ideology and power that ultimately and ironically led to the restoration of the Stuart Dynasty.

The succession of his son Richard as Lord Protector only led to further discontent and uncertainty, representing a transition of power that no one else, least of all "Tumbledown Dick," had wished for. By May of 1659, with Richard's abdication, a call for new parliamentary elections revived republican hopes as General Harrison and Henry Vane were given important posts on the new Council of State. General Lambert, however, seized the opportunity for another coup d'état in October 1659, which General Monck suppressed in February 1660. With members of the Presbyterian Long Parliament restored to office, Monck seized upon the opportunity to restore Charles II. He saw this

as the best means to withstand continued coups, or, worse in his eyes, the political ascension of sectarian republicans. That spring, through Monck's machinations, a vengeful Charles II rode triumphantly through London and reclaimed the throne of his slain father.⁶⁹

During Vane's brief return from power, Thomas Venner and Wentworth Day were released from the Tower.⁷⁰ The former New Englander found the Restoration completely intolerable. Even worse, the skulls of his old comrades Thomas Harrison and John Carew now adorned the gates of London Bridge, beheaded by Charles II for their role in the regicide proceedings. This was too much for Venner, who soon began reorganizing his sect on Coleman Street. We know that even after the Restoration, Venner and his congregation held fast to the hope that the Good Old Cause could yet be resurrected. In a series of meetings held late in 1660, Venner, together with many of the same men who had risen with him in 1657, decided that the saints could not wait, pray, and be patient for change. They published another manifesto, entitled *A Door of Hope Opened*, and tried unsuccessfully to supplement their ranks with recruits from Wentworth Day's congregation.

A Door of Hope expressed the disillusionment and rage of the expropriated, "whose lives, estates and liberties...are ready to be made a prey by the cruelest and wickedest."⁷¹ Venner's Fifth Monarchist revolt aimed to obliterate the forms of outward bondage, codified in "carnal law," that robbed the poor of their civil liberties and material sustenance. The "reform of law" would take place "without respect to the sick or poor;" "abuses" of the law "in cases of debtors and creditors" would be "duly reformed," and the

⁶⁹ Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 218-230; Hutton, *British Republic*, 118-130.

⁷⁰ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 124, 267.

⁷¹ Venner, *A Door of Hope*, 3-4.

prisoners languishing in debtor gaols like the Comptor prison on nearby Wood Street would be set free according to the principles of the jubilee. The manifesto called for the abolition of capital punishment for property crimes, although “man-stealers” would receive death. The poor were to be given employment, and those who committed property crimes would pay restitution; unfree labor in the army, the navy, or on the plantation would not be considered a “legal reform” for those whom poverty had driven to desperate straits.⁷² The working-class experiences of Venner’s congregants defined the practical Christian content of their republicanism with particular clarity in this respect. Its radicalism can be measured against the ruling-class view of fellow republicans and practical Christians who sponsored the reforms that Fifth Monarchists viewed as slavery. The rebels also called for an end to the “persecution of saints in England and Ireland,” a reference to the sufferings of Quakers and Baptists. Venner reflected on his New England experience, and wrote that, “the true church of Christ will be brought out of the Wilderness” to preserve the “lives, liberties and estates” of the people against “greediness and excess.” *A Door of Hope* seems to have taken some of its inspiration from Harrington’s “agrarian law” by advocating that an equitable distribution of property would lend political stability to the republic. This redistribution would “not feed the fowls of prey, and enrich and corrupt particular persons as of late, but carry on the work of God and the Army of the Lamb, in which every soldier shall be sufficiently provided for,” because the “balance of lands must be adequate to the commonwealth.” But more reminiscent of Winstanley than Harrington, Venner wrote that a “common

⁷² Ibid., 5-6.

treasury” would be formed to supply the wants and needs of the new republic’s citizens so that no person would remain poor.⁷³

The manifesto was discussed, debated, and written in the old meetinghouse on Swann Alley, off Coleman Street, where the spirit of Samuel How still reigned despite the restoration of monarchy and episcopacy. This was fitting, for Coleman Street Ward had witnessed some of the most significant events of England’s turbulent seventeenth-century history. These included the chartering of the Bay Colony, John Cotton’s escape to New England, Samuel How’s famous sermon, the King’s failed search for the Five Members, the birth of the Leveller movement with its mass petitioning campaigns, the decision to execute the King at *The Star* tavern, and the organization of the Fifth Monarchy movement. With the outbreak of Venner’s rising, the year 1661 would provide a fittingly dramatic conclusion to this extraordinary history.

In January 1661, with the battle cry “King Jesus and the heads on the gate!” Venner led his sect in an open rebellion against the royal government.⁷⁴ In a scene that must have played out the worst Munster-inspired fears of Presbyterians and Royalists, Venner’s rebels from Wapping’s docks and Coleman Street’s alleys plunged London into a state of fear and panic that Samuel Pepys vividly recounted in his diary. As described in the introduction to this dissertation, the rebels fought over four days in firefights that ran the length of the City, half their troop was killed, and more were shot out of hand

⁷³ Ibid., Part 3, Part 4.

⁷⁴ Estimates of Venner’s band ranged from fifty to four hundred; all the accounts taken together suggest there were several columns of rebels converging on the city from different directions. See *A Relation or History of the Rise and Suppression of the Fifth Monarchy within the Kingdom of England, the Chief of which Sect was one Thomas Venner, a Wine Cooper* (London, 1661) and Archdeacon Echard’s account of Venner’s 1661 rising in *Cobbett’s Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and Other Crimes and Misdemeanors, 1671-1678* (London: TC Hanserd, 1810) 6: 67-70.

despite surrendering. After engaging the trained bands in the City, the rebels fled to the outskirts of London, where they regrouped.

They emerged two days later, and fought bloody engagements in the center of the City, with a particularly ferocious clash on Wood Street where Venner brained three men to death with his halberd. This combat took place in front of the Comptor Prison, a notoriously brutal, disease-ridden dungeon where debtors and political dissidents languished in fetid squalor.⁷⁵ There, in fulfillment of the jubilee, the rebels demanded the release of the “poor prisoners,” many of whom were possibly destined for plantation labor in the Caribbean.⁷⁶ Once through the gates of the prison, Venner’s men planned to free the prisoners, “the poor, the oppressed and nearly devoured people,” in order to spread the rebellion throughout London. A vicious firefight developed in front of the Comptor, with each side sustaining dozens of casualties. Several witnesses noted that the rebels “fell on the guard” “with mad courage” as their battle cries for “King Jesus!” mixed with the sound of gunshots and clashing steel. Ultimately unsuccessful in liberating the prisoners, the rebels dissolved and scudded across the city, only to reappear

⁷⁵ Archdeacon Laurence Echard, *The History of England* (London, 1707), 104.

⁷⁶ The Woodstreet and Poultry Comptors received debtors and felons, but also saints who refused to pay tithes. Fifth Monarchists under arrest also served time there. Earlier, at the outbreak of the Civil War, it witnessed a riotous scene when supporters of Parliament stormed its gates to free their “brethren.” The comptors had become visceral symbols of tyranny and oppression to the godly, helping to explain why they were singled out for attack. For accounts of the prisons, see the following: James Peller Malcolm, *Londinium Redivum Vol IV* (London, 1807); Guildhall Library Pamphlet 7442, *The True Relation of the Bloody Attempt by James Salowayes to Cut his own Throat in the Compter, Upon Sunday the 21 of June, 1662*; Guildhall Library Pamphlet 3112, *The Counter-Scuffle* (1647); Thomas Jordan, *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon, with the Humors of Compter Gate in Woodstreet* (London, 1657); *The Humble Petition of the Poore Distressed Prisoners in Poultry Compter* (London, 1644); *The Humble Petition of the Poor Debtors in the Common-Gaol, Newgate* (London, 1653); Bruce Watson, “The Compter Prisons of London,” *London Archeologist* Winter 7 (1993), 115-118.

“like the gathering of clouds” on College Hill and Maiden Lane near Threadneedle Street.⁷⁷

Beaten out of Wood Street, the rebels broke formation, with some holing-up in *The Helmet* on Threadneedle Street. More rebels fled to another tavern, *The Blue Anchor*, situated atop Coleman Street near the Postern.⁷⁸ Royalist troops broke through the clay tiles of *The Blue Anchor*’s roof with musket butts, and poured a lethal volley into the top floor chambers where the surviving rebels, commanded by Venner, had taken-up defensive positions. Jumping into the room through the hole they had opened in the ceiling, the King’s soldiers shot and killed several of the wounded rebels who refused to give up their names.⁷⁹ Other rebels, fleeing through the warren of lanes and alleys darting off of Coleman Street, were taken prisoner by Colonel Cox’s Life Guards and imprisoned in Newgate. But it was at *The Blue Anchor*, its floors slippery with blood, where Venner and a score of men were ultimately captured.

The desperately wounded Venner and over a dozen bloodied survivors were put on trial at the Old Bailey. There, Venner made the Atlantic history of the rebellion clear by justifying his actions according to the “twenty two year testimony” of his life in New England. The rebels were quickly convicted and some days later, unable to walk, Venner and his chief lieutenant Hodgkins were dragged through Cheapside on a sledge in front of a jeering crowd. When this humiliation ended, both were placed on a specially-constructed scaffold mounted opposite the Swann Alley meetinghouse. As his gaze fell upon the house, Venner must have reflected on why he had led his “overcomers” to

⁷⁷ Echard, *History of England*, 69; “A Relation of the Arraignment and Trial of Those Who Made the Late Rebellious Insurrection in London, 1661,” in Scott, ed., *The Somer’s Tracts* (London, 1809-1815), 4: 470-471.

⁷⁸ CSPD Chas II 1660-1661, 470.

⁷⁹ *Munster Paralleled in the Late Massacre Committed by the Fifth Monarchists* (London, 1661), 34-35.

become “soldiers in the Lord’s army.” Their godly commission, Venner had often preached, was justified by the decades-long struggle to overthrow Anti-christ in both Old and New England. The true church, as the saints had written in their manifesto, had been brought out of the wilderness. Once on the scaffold and undaunted by impending death, Venner found the courage to tell the crowd that he would not repent because he had not sinned. Rather, it was “the duty of every saint to look for liberty.” Another time would come when men would be judged by God alone. With these words, the executioner dispatched Venner, whose intestines were drawn from his body, and according to custom, burned before his eyes. The executioner then hacked the limbs off of his still living victim. The grisly affair finally ended with Venner’s decapitation. Later that day, the heads of the rebel chief and his lieutenant, Roger Hodgkins, were spiked atop a rail on the south end of London Bridge. This “exemplary punishment,” as a Royal official hoped, would serve as a warning to all republican plotters.⁸⁰

Other republicans met similar fates, while those who escaped formed a Restoration diaspora across the Atlantic world. Most notable among the executed was Sir Henry Vane, a man Charles II thought “too dangerous to live,” although Vane had opposed the execution of his father. Vane proved particularly courageous during his last days. He gave an able defense of the Good Old Cause during his trial, one that he based upon the King’s reply to the Nineteen Propositions. While leaving the courtroom after his conviction, Vane repeated Thomas Venner’s last words: “Whom man judges, God will not condemn.” A fitting reconciliation between two godly leaders from New England, who despite their differences as English republicans, eventually found common

⁸⁰ *The Last Farewell to the Rebellious Sect Called the Fifth Monarchy Men on Wednesday January the Ninth* (London, 1661), 3; Champlin Burrage, “Fifth Monarchy Insurrections,” 722-47; CSPD Charles II 1661, 470; Echard, *History of England*, 108.

ground after the Western Design to oppose what they viewed as the unbearable tyranny of the Protectorate. On the eve of his execution, Henry Vane made love to his wife. The next day on the scaffold, this remarkable man elicited the admiration even of Royalists, although not so much that they would allow the crowd to hear his execution speech, which they drowned out with a series of trumpet blasts. His final words were, “I bless the Lord I have not deserted the righteous cause for which I suffer.”⁸¹

Coleman Street regicide MPs Isaac Pennington and Owen Roe died of disease in the Tower before they could be executed, while the ward’s sectarian fixtures Henry Jessey, John Goodwin, Hanserd Knollys, and Wentworth Day suffered dozens of arrests over the next decade for continued republican plotting.⁸² There is evidence to suggest that a Royal court deported Day to Barbados after his arrest in a Baptist meeting in Billingsgate, where mariners tried to protect him from the King’s troops. Mary Dyer, who in 1652 had accompanied John Clarke and Roger Williams on their mission to London to secure a charter for Rhode Island, returned to Massachusetts after a stay in Barbados. As we noted before, she was executed after refusing to relent in her crusade for the natural right to liberty of conscience, a struggle that she began with Anne Hutchinson twenty-two years earlier in Boston.⁸³

Fate proved kinder to the Fifth Monarchist John Clarke, who distanced himself from Venner in the wake of the rebellion, a move that ultimately enabled him to secure a charter from Charles II guaranteeing liberty of conscience for Rhode Island. He returned there in 1663, and devoted the rest of his life to the practice of medicine and the gathering of Baptist churches both in New and Old England, corresponding with Coleman Street

⁸¹ Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm*, 110; Rowe, *Henry Vane*, 241.

⁸² W. Kiffin, *The Life and Death of That Old Disciple of Christ Hanserd Knollys* (London, 1688).

⁸³ George Bishop, *New England Judged By the Spirit of the Lord* (London, 1661).

preachers until his death.⁸⁴ William Righton, a Fifth Monarchist who signed Clarke's *Declaration of Gathered Churches*, returned to Bermuda where he befriended Quakers and even mounted a republican rebellion against the island's Royalist governors.⁸⁵ Regicide New Model Army officers Robert Goffe and William Whalley escaped Charles II and found refuge in New Haven, Connecticut under the protection of the old Coleman Street minister John Davenport. Perhaps the most elusive of all was the panicked rebel we met at the outset of the chapter, William Parsons. Parsons did escape from England and eventually made his way to America, where he died in Massachusetts in 1702. Magistrate Samuel Sewall noted Parson's death with this journal entry: "Buried William Parsons today. Was in the Fifth Monarchy fray in London, but slipped away in the crowd."⁸⁶

⁸⁴ James, *John Clarke*, 62-97; Roger Hayden, ed. *The Records of a Church of Christ in Bristol, 1640-87* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1974), 34, 36, 282-296.

⁸⁵ CSPC 1661, 7: 512; 10: 699; Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 260; J.H. LeFroy, *Memorials of the Discovery and Early Settlement of the Bermudas or Somers Islands, 1511-1687* (Reprint 1937), 2: 53, 99.

⁸⁶ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 223.

CONCLUSION

Several conclusions may be drawn from this dissertation. First, from 1624 through 1638, a trans-Atlantic network of godly saints formed in Coleman Street Ward, London. The network actively opposed Stuart innovations in church and state, and taking their cause beyond England's borders, organized, financed, chartered, and helped settle the Massachusetts Bay Colony. But as the godly united against the Stuarts at home, internal divisions between parochial saints and their sectarian critics developed within the ward's godly community, largely because the sectarians proposed a radically egalitarian gospel of antinomian grace that threatened the hierarchies of power savored by their more eminent and traditional brethren. Secondly, from 1638 through 1652, a political conflict in New England between the Vane/Hutchinson and Winthrop/Shepard factions over the magistrate's authority to subdue religious heterodoxy ended in the banishment of sectarian radicals from the Bay Colony. These New England sectarians, embracing many of the same ideals preached in Coleman Street's conventicles, established exile communities in Rhode Island that embraced liberty of conscience in a form of commonwealth government that they styled a "democracy." The outbreak of war in England connected these currents of trans-Atlantic radical reformation in a political program that emphasized civil equality and the natural right to resist civil tyranny. Two Rhode Island exiles, Roger Williams and Samuel Gorton, found their way to Coleman Street during the First English Civil War (1642-1646), where they emerged, beside the figure of another ex-New Englander, Henry Vane, as leading figures in the cause of religious toleration during the debates between Presbyterians and Independents concerning the reformation of the English Church. The circle of radicals that Williams

and Gorton joined, led initially by Coleman Street's John Goodwin, ultimately gave rise to the Leveller movement, which mobilized support for radical republican initiatives within the ward's network of sectarian conventicles. Third, from 1647 through 1661, after a wave of remigration from New England, a core of former Hutchinsonians emerged in London at the forefront of a radical republican movement that drew on the politicized atmosphere and organizational strength that had been fermenting within Coleman Street Ward's sectarian circles for two decades. Clearly, this network owed its development to circular, rather than linear movement across the Atlantic world. Although liberty of conscience and practical Christianity formed the touchstone of their religious and political beliefs, research to this point suggests that radical sectarians in New and Old England did not retain a fixed political, let alone republican ideology before, through, and after the Great Migration and English Civil War. As the case of Henry Vane illustrates, the political and religious radicalism of trans-Atlantic sectarians appears rather as the product of experiences shaped by complex change over time within a trans-national context.

I have tried to show throughout the dissertation that greater attention to the Atlantic dimensions of seventeenth-century republicanism can raise new questions about the sources and contexts of radical politicization during the time of New and Old England's troubles. In Rhode Island, antinomians banished from the Bay Colony founded a democratic commonwealth to break the outward bondage that they had experienced at the hands of the General Court, which in their eyes perverted godly liberty by defining dissent as sedition and order as the arbitrary exercise of state power. Importantly, in the inaugural era of the first British Empire, many of New England's

radicals rejected that the seeds of a reformed commonwealth could be sown through conquest, forced conversion, and enslavement, which deprived “natives” of their bodily freedom, religious convictions, and rights in the land. In their Rhode Island exile, antinomians forged a principle of commonwealth government that held that the saints’ soul liberty and spiritual regeneration could only be realized by struggling to liberate their fellow creatures from the temporal chains of outward bondage. Noting the prominent part ex-New Englanders like Henry Vane and his friend Roger Williams played in debates about the political and religious settlement of the English commonwealth, scholars may wish to explore how radical experience in New England could recast the freeborn liberties of English Christians as universal freedoms, a crucial development in contemporary thought concerning natural rights.

Radical experience, of course, also stretched beyond New England to the decks of the English fleet, the steaming jungles of Jamaica, the rainy glens of southern Ireland, the docks of Portsmouth, and the crowded meetinghouses in the narrow lanes of Coleman Street, London. Although the prospect of an Old England made new again after the Civil War helped inspire the return of New England’s radicals, their experiences in America informed their political activity in London, and contributed to a pivotal moment (1656-57) in the evolution of republican opposition to Cromwell. In the fallout of the Western Design, the returned radicals infused their concept of good government in England, as they had in Rhode Island, with a definition of commonwealth liberty that could only be achieved through the realization of practical Christianity, which necessitated the destruction of the antichristian yokes –forced conversion, bond slavery, impressment, and colonial conquest- that the Protectorate ruling-class had used to aggrandize its own

power. In Machiavellian tradition, Cromwell and his supporters proclaimed that the Western Design represented the republic's path to glory and greatness; they foreshadowed Harrington by stressing that apocalyptic regeneration would follow imperial conquest to ensure the perpetuity of the republic. In contrast, the radicals dismissed this colonial enterprise as the work of "self-seeking," "corrupt and salaried men" like Martin Noell and Thomas Gage, members of the Protectorate regime whom the radicals believed had transformed the commonwealth into a vehicle for their private ambitions. In forms that ranged from printing to preaching, from overpowering press gangs to provoking Caribbean mutinies, from shielding fugitives from slave catchers to open rebellion in the streets of London, radicals defined the "Good Old Cause" against the mercenary expansion of the imperial English state, which had imposed multiple forms of outward bondage on its own people and countless others across the Atlantic world.

This conflict between practical Christianity and the "political arithmetic" of colonial conquest produced a brand of political radical thought and action that did not elevate the power and glory of the state over the common good of its people. In the thought of the sectarians that I have explored, their concepts of political justice emphasized self and social governance over greed and corruption. This freed people from the inward bondage of their own ambition and the outward bondage that this self-seeking placed on others. The radicals embraced the idea of exporting the revolution beyond England, but condemned the republican ruling-class when it appeared to pursue this course as means that worked toward the "enrichment and corruption of particular persons" within the government.

To the trans-Atlantic radicals, a just republic could not be secured if material increase and republican-styled imperial glory came at the expense of the liberty of others, regardless of race or religious belief. The experience of many of these radicals across the Atlantic world, and the practical Christianity that they all embraced, made this concept of natural rights possible. It is not going too far to suggest then, that in the course of the seventeenth century, with radicals outlawing chattel slavery in Rhode Island, opposing the Irish slave trade, and proclaiming against man-stealing, the crusade they waged against outward bondage shaped the organization and ideological content of the first trans-Atlantic abolition movement.

Finally, a word about capitalism, class conflict and seventeenth-century republicanism. I have argued that former New Englanders emerged as leaders of a trans-Atlantic political movement that, in a pivotal moment in the evolution of republican ideas and practice in England, defined itself in negative fashion against a range of practices that emerged in an exploitative nexus produced by the rise of Atlantic capitalism and English imperialism. In their agitation against outward bondage, these radicals did not differentiate between the slavery of absolute monarchy, religious persecution, and coerced, unfree labor. They specifically condemned practices that reconfigured labor power merely as an economic commodity or as an instrument of state expansion. The radicals redefined these de-humanizing, profit-making, and imperial strategies as tyranny. As Rhode Island Baptists, Gortonists, Levellers, Quakers, Seekers, and Fifth Monarchists proclaimed in thought and deed, the right to possess one's labor power was wrapped up with other rights in the free use of the land, in religious expression, in civil liberties, and in the rule of law. These rights were inalienable; they were the property of the citizens of

the world, which was itself a commonwealth. These rights were not the property of MPs, magistrates, government contractors, ship captains, slave traders, or Lord Protectors. They recognized that the process of expropriation sponsored by these figures did not represent true liberty, but a form of state-sponsored economic exploitation calculated to produce the profits on which the power of a tyrannical empire would rest. In dialectical fashion, then, colonial conquest in New England, Ireland, and the Caribbean proved to be a forcing house of class-conscious commonwealth radicalism, as well as a stage of primitive accumulation in capitalism's Atlantic history.

Class, as E.P. Thompson wrote long ago, is a "relationship" and not a "thing," and as he recognized, it can be intellectualized out of existence if one examines it "not as it is, but as it ought to be."¹ The trans-Atlantic radical community of Coleman Street Ward clearly did not march in the army of General Lud, but this is not to say that during the seventeenth century, working people who worshiped in radical sects did not develop revolutionary notions of freedom and justice from below to challenge a revolution from above that sought to redefine political and economic liberty through a decidedly capitalist and imperialist worldview. Historians, however, should not use the radicals' writings and collective forms of political organization to argue that they were forerunners of later class-conscious movements. Their ideas acquire greater significance when viewed within the context of contemporary works like Harrington's *Oceana*. If explored in this way, ruling-class formulations can no longer stand alone as linguistic and ideological hegemony in the world of republican ideas; they were contested by other republicans, with other languages, and importantly, with conflicting programs, that articulated the

¹ E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 10-11.

grievances of the expropriated. Like Harrington, Coleman Street's trans-Atlantic radicals abhorred monarchy and favored religious toleration, but they went far beyond the idea that the peace of the commonwealth depended upon the state's perpetual mobilization for war. The sectarian radicals envisioned their revolution as a worldwide reformation that rejected the deification of imperial glory, a rising against the outward bondage of political and economic tyranny that clothed itself in the language of liberty, a revolution, as Venner wrote reflecting on his life in America, that would not occur in a single place, but within the saints themselves, and "on the very stage of action, the marketplace of the world."²

² Venner, *A Standard*, Part 20.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Manuscripts

Bodleian Library

MS Eng C 6075 f.155/1

Carte MS 74 fos. 37-43

Rawlinson MS A 24 fos. 11-29

Rawlinson MS A 37 f. 45

Rawlinson MS A 39 f. 528

Rawlinson MS A 47 fos. 21, 27, 30

Rawlinson MS A 49 fos. 20, 110, 169

Rawlinson MS A 192 f. 341

Rawlinson MS A 187 fos. 445-446

British Library

Add MS 4459 fol. 111-112

Corporation of London Record Office

Gaol Delivery Sessions, 1656-1657

Sessions File 139: May 29, 1657

Folger Library

Bennett Mss X.d. 483(50)

Guildhall Library

Ms 4457 vol. 2, 3

Public Record Office, Kew Gardens

PRO C 66 291/7
S.P. Dom. 16/363/120

Books, Pamphlets, Collected Records, and Letters

W.C. Abbott, *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937)

William Aspinwall, *A Discourse on the Principal Points Touching Baptism* (London, 1652)

William Aspinwall, *The Legislative Power is Christ's Peculiar Prerogative* (London, 1656)

William Aspinwall, *A Premonition of Sad, Sundry Calamities Yet to Come* (London, 1654)

William Aspinwall, *A Volume Relating to the Early History of Boston Containing the Aspinwall Notarial Records from 1644-1651* (Boston Municipal Printing Office, 1903)

Robert Baillie, *Anabaptism, The True Fountain of Independency* (London, 1647)

Robert Baillie, *A Spiritual Dissuasive against the Errors of the Time* (London, 1647)

Sir Richard Baker, *A Chronicle of the Kings of England* (London, 1696)

John Ball, *A Tryall of the New-Church Way in New England and in Old* (London, 1644)

Slingsby Bethel, *The World's Mistake in Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1668)

Thomas Birch, ed., *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, vol.7* (London, 1742)

George Bishop, *New England Judged By the Spirit of the Lord Pt.I* (London, 1661)

Robert Blackbourne, *A Letter from a Christian Friend in the Country to Another in the City* (London, 1655)

- William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647*, Samuel Elliot Morrison, ed., (New York: Knopf, 1953)
- William Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined* (London, 1649)
- Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, North America and the West Indies, 1574-1739* (London: Public Record Office, 1860)
- Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Charles I, 1625-1649* (London: Public Record Office, 1900)
- Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Charles II, 1649-1661* (London: Public Record Office, 1900)
- John Callendar, ed., *An Historical Discourse on the Civil and Religious Affairs of the Colony of Rhode Island* (Providence: Knowles, Vose and Co., 1838)
- John Canne, *A Friend to the Prisoners and the Good Old Cause for which they Suffered* (London, 1658)
- John Canne, *The Necessity of Separation* (Amsterdam, 1635)
- Daniel Cawdry, *Vindiciae Clavium: or A Vindication of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven* (London, 1645)
- Howard Chapin, ed., *The Documentary History of Rhode Island, vol. II* (Providence: Preston and Rounds Co., 1979)
- John Clarke, *Ill News from New England* (London, 1652)
- John Cotton, *An Abstract of Laws and Government...Published After his Death by William Aspinwall* (London, 1655)
- John Cotton, *An Exposition Upon the Thirteenth Chapter of Revelation* (London, 1645)
- John Cotton, *A Key to the Kingdom of Heaven* (London, 1644)
- John Cotton, *The Powering Out of the Seven Vials* (London, 1642)
- John Cotton, *The Way of the Congregational Churches Cleared* (London, 1646)
- John Cotton, *The Way of the New England Churches* (1644)

- Edward Coxere, *Adventures by Sea of Edward Coxere*, H.W. Meyerstein, ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946)
- John Davenport, *An Answer of the Elders of Several Churches in New England unto Nine Positions Sent over to Them* (London, 1643)
- John Davenport, *The Covenant of God's Free Grace Most Sweetly Unfolded* (London, 1645)
- John Davenport, *Letters of John Davenport, Puritan Divine*, ed., Isabel MacBeath Calder (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937)
- A Declaration of the Army Concerning the Apprehending of Major Gen. Overton* (London, 1654)
- A Declaration or Representation from Sir Thomas Fairfax and the Army Under his Command* (London, 1647) in A.S.P. Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty: Being the Army Debates (1647-1649) from the Clarke Manuscripts with Supplementary Documents* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1974)
- A Declaration of Several Gathered Churches* (London, 1654)
- Daniel de Foe, *The History of the Great Plague in London, in the Year 1665* (London, 1754)
- Sir William Dugdale, *A Short View of the Late Troubles in England* (London, 1681)
- Laurence Echard, *The History of England* (London, 1707)
- Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana: or A Catalogue and Discovery of many of the Errours...of this Time, Parts I- III* (London, 1646)
- R. Elyman, *The Hunting of the Fox or The Sectaries Dissected* (London, 1648)
- The Faithful Narrative of the Late Testimony and Demand made to Oliver Cromwell...on the Behalf of the Lord's Prisoners* (London, 1655)
- C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait, eds., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, vol. 2 (London, 1911)

- C.H. Firth, ed., *The Clarke Papers*, vols. 1-4 (London: Camden Society, 1891-1901)
- C.H. Firth, ed., *The Narrative of General Venables* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1902)
- Lion Gardiner, "Lieft. Lion Gardner his Relation of the Pequot Warres," *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, 3rd Series, 3: 148-149.
- John Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme* (London, 1642)
- John Goodwin, *A Calumny of Mr. Prynne* (London, 1645)
- John Goodwin, *Hagiomastrix* (London, 1647)
- John Goodwin, *Independency God's Verity* (London, 1647) in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 186-187.
- John Goodwin, *Pagans' Debt and Dowry* (London, 1651)
- John Goodwin, *Theomachia* (London, 1644)
- Samuel Gorton, *Simplicities Defense Against a Many-Headed Policy* (London, 1646) in Sacvan Bercovitch, ed., *Tracts Against New England* (New York: AMS Press, 1985)
- Vincent Harlow, *A History of Barbados, 1625-1685* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926)
- James Harrington, *The Common-wealth of Oceana* (London, 1656)
- Roger Hayden, ed., *The Records of a Church of Christ in Bristol 1640-87* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1974)
- Hell Broke Loose, or an Answer to the Late and Bloody Rebellious Declaration of the Phanatiques* (London, 1661)
- To the Honest Soldiers of the Garrison of Hull* (London, 1656)
- Thomas Hooker, "The Danger of Desertion," in Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco, eds., *The Puritans in America: A Narrative Anthology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985)
- Thomas Hooker, *Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline* (London, 1648)

- Thomas Hooker, *The Writings of Thomas Hooker: Spiritual Adventure in Two Worlds*, Sargent Bush, ed., (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980)
- Samuel How, *The Sufficiencie of the Spirits Teaching Without Humane Learning* (London, 1644)
- James Howell, *Mercurius Hibernicus: or an Inquiry into the Late Insurrection in Ireland* (London, 1642)
- Thomas Howell, ed., *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and Other Crimes and Misdemeanors, vol.6, 1671-1678* (London: TC Hanserd, 1810)
- The Humble Petition of the Mariners and Sea-Men, Inhabitants in and about the Ports of London and the River Thames* (London, 1642)
- The Humble Petition of the Poor Debtors in the Common-Gaol, Newgate* (London, 1653)
- The Humble Petition of the Poore Distressed Prisoners in Poultry Compter* (London, 1644)
- William Hubbard, *The Present State of New England, Being a Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians in New England* (London, 1677)
- William Hughes, *Munster and Abingdon* (Oxford, 1657)
- John Cordy Jeafferson, ed, *Middlesex County Records, vols. 3-4* (London: Middlesex Co. Records Society, 1888)
- Edward Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-working Providence, 1628-1651*, Franklin Jameson, ed., (New York, 1910),
- Thomas Jordan, *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon, with the Humors of Compter Gate in Woodstreet* (London, 1657)
- John Jubbes, *Several Proposals for Peace and Freedom by an Agreement of the People* (London, 1648) in D.M. Wolfe, ed., *The Leveller Manifestoes of the Puritan Revolution* (New York: Humanities Press, 1967)
- Robert Keayne, *The Apologia of Robert Keayne*, Bernard Bailyn, ed., (New York: Harper and Row, 1965)
- George Kendall, *Theokratia, A Vindication of the Doctrine Commonly Received in the Reformed Churches* (London, 1653)

- Hanserd Knollys, *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory* (London, 1641)
- Hanserd Knollys, *A Moderate Answer unto Dr. Bastwick's Book* (London, 1645)
- Thomas Lamb, *A Fresh Suit Against Independency, or the National Church-way Vindicated, The Independent Church-way Condemned* (London, 1677)
- The Last Farewell to the Rebellious Sect Called the Fifth Monarchy Men on Wednesday January the Ninth* (London, 1661)
- The Last Speech and Prayer, with Other Passages of Thomas Venner* (London, 1660)
- The Leveller, Or the Principles and Maxims Concerning Government and Religion* (London, 1659)
- The Levellers Vindicated* (London, 1649)
- Liberty of Conscience Asserted* (London, 1649)
- John Lilburne, *England's Birthright Justified* (London, 1645)
- John Lilburne, Henry Overton, John Wildman, and William Walwyn, *An Agreement of the People* (November 3, 1647) in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 443-445.
- John Lilburne, Henry Overton, and William Walwyn, *The Large Petition of the Levellers* (London, 1647) in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 318-323.
- John Lilburne, *Legal Fundamental Liberties* (London, 1649) in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 342-355.
- London's Glory, or the The Riot and Ruine of the Fifth Monarchy Men* (London, 1661)
- Donald S. Lutz, ed., "Rhode Island," *Colonial Origins of the American Constitution: A Documentary History* (1998), http://oll.libertyfund.org/Texts/LFBooks/Lutz0397/ColonialOrigins/HTMLs/0013_Pt04_RI.html#hd_lf013.head.229.
- Patrick McGrath, ed., *Merchants and Merchandise in Seventeenth-Century Bristol* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1955)
- Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Works of the Famous Nicholas Machiavel*, translated by Henry Neville (London, 1680)

A Manifesto of the Lord Protector...Whereas is Shown the Reasonableness of the Cause of this Republic Against the Depredations of the Spaniards (London, 1655)

Richard Mather, *Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed* (London, 1643)

John Milton, *Areopagitica, A Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing* (London, 1644)

Nathaniel Morton, *New England's Memorial* (Cambridge, 1669)

Munster Paralleled in the Late Massacre Committed by the Fifth Monarchists (London, 1661)

A Narrative wherein is Faithfully Set Forth the Sufferings of John Canne, Wentworth Day, and John Clarke (London, 1658)

Marchmont Nedham, *The Excellencie of a Free State* (London, 1656)

James Noyes, *The Temple Measured or A Brief Survey of the Temple Mystical which is the Instituted Church of Christ* (London, 1647)

The Old Leaven Purged Out...A True and Faithful Narrative of the Orderly Proceedings and Dealings of the Lesser Part of the Congregation Formerly Walking with Mr. John Sympson (London, 1658)

Richard Overton, *The Arraignment of Mr. Persecution* (London, 1645)

Richard Overton, *Martin's Echo* (London, 1645)

Robert Overton, *Two Letters from Major General Overton* (London, 1654)

Ephraim Pagitt, *Heresiography or a Description and History of the Hereticks and Sectaries Sprang-Up in These Latter Times* (London, 6th ed., April 1662)

Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Richard La Gallienne, ed., (New York: Modern Library, 2001)

William Perkins, *The Works of William Perkins*, Ian Breward, ed., (London: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970)

John Perrot, *Battering Rams Against Rome* (London, 1661)

John Perrot, *To the Upright in Heart, and Faithful People of God: Being and Epistle Written in Barbados the 3d. of the 9th Month, 1662* (London, 1662)

A Political Catechism (London, 1643)

Vavassor Powell, *Hypocrisie Unmasked* (London, 1655)

The Putney Debates at the General Council of Officers at Putney, 28th October, 29th October, and 1st November, 1647 in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 1-95.

William Pynchon, *The Meritorious Price of Our Redemption* (London, 1650)

“A Relation of the Arraignment and Trial of Those Who Made the Late Rebellious Insurrection in London, 1661,” in Sir Walter Scott, ed., *A Collection of the Most Scarce and Valuable Tracts on the Most Interesting and Entertaining Subjects: but Chiefly as Such that Relate to the History and Constitution of these Kingdoms. Selected from an Infinite Number in Print and Manuscript, in the Royal, Cotton, Sion, and other Private, as Well as Public Libraries; Particularly that of the Late Lord Sommers* (London, 1809-1815), 4: 470-471.

A Relation or History of the Rise and Suppression of the Fifth Monarchy within the Kingdom of England, the Chief of which Sect was one Thomas Venner, a Wine Cooper (London, 1661)

A Representation of the Army (14th June) in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 403-409.

Samuel Rutherford, *A Survey of the Spiritual AntiChrist* (London, 1648)

I.S., *A Brief and Perfect Journal of the Late Proceedings and Success of the English Army in the West Indies* (London, 1655)

John Saltmarsh, *Smoke in the Temple* (London, 1646) in Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, 179-186.

James Savage, ed., *The History of New England from 1630-1649 by John Winthrop, Esq., vols. 1-2* (Boston: Phelps and Farnham, 1825)

Thomas Scot, *The Spaniards Cruelty and Treachery to the English in the Time of Peace and War, Discovered* (London, 1656)

John Selden, *Mare Clausum* (London, 1618), Marchmont Nedham, trans., *Of the Dominion or Ownership of the Sea* (London, 1652)

- Edward Sexby, *Killing Noe Murder* (London, 1657)
- Nathaniel Shurtleff, ed., *Records of Massachusetts Bay Colony* (New York: AMS Press, 1968)
- Edward Stillingfleet, *The Unreasonableness of Separation* (London, 1647)
- John Taylor, *Religions Enemies, With a Brief and Ingenious Relation* (London, 1641)
- John Taylor, *A Swarme of Sectaries* (London, 1640)
- Tom Tell-Troth, or Works of Darkness Brought to Light* (London, 1647)
- A True Catalogue, or Account of the Several Places where Richard Cromwell was Declared Lord Protector* (London, 1659)
- A True Narrative of the Examination, Tryall, and Sufferings of James Nayler in the Cities of London and Westminster, and his Deportment Under Them* (London, 1657)
- Tub Preachers Overturned or Independency Overthrown* (London, 1647)
- John Underhill, *News from America* (London, 1638)
- Thomas Underhill, *Hell Broke Loose* (London, 1660)
- Henry Vane, *A Healing Question* (London, 1656)
- Henry Vane, *The Retired Man's Meditations* (London, 1655)
- Thomas Venner, *A Door of Hope Opened* (London, 1661)
- Thomas Venner, *A Standard Set Up* (London, 1657)
- John Vicars, *Coleman Street Conclave Visited* (London, 1648)
- The Vindication of the Cobbler* (London, 1640)
- William Walwyn, *The Compassionate Samaritan* (London, 1644) in David Wooton, ed., *Divine Right and Democracy, An Anthology of Political Writing in Stuart England* (London: Penguin, 1988)
- William Walwyn, *England's Lamentable Slavery* (London, 1645), in J.R. McMichael and Barbara Taft, eds., *The Writings of William Walwyn*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989)

- William Walwyn, *The English Soldier's Standard* (London, 1649)
- William Walwyn, *Gold Tried in the Fire, or the Burnt Petitions Revived* (London, 1647), in McMichael and Taft, eds., *The Writings of William Walwyn*
- William Walwyn (?), *Tyrannipocrit Discovered* (Amsterdam, 1649)
- William Walwyn, *The Vanitie of the Present Churches* (London, 1649) in McMichael and Taft, eds., *The Writings of William Walwyn*
- William Walwyn, *Walwyn's Just Defense* (London, 1649) in McMichael and Taft, eds., *The Writings of William Walwyn*
- Nathaniel Ward, *The Simple Cobbler of Agawam* (London, 1647)
- Thomas Weld, *A Brief Narration of the Practices of the Churches in New England* (London, 1645)
- John Wheelwright, *A Fast Day Sermon*, in David D. Hall, ed., *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Documentary History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 152-173.
- John Wheelwright, *Mercurius Americanus: Mr. Weld His Antitype, or, Massachusetts' Great Apology Examined* (London, 1645)
- John Wildman, *Putney Projects* (London, 1647)
- Roger Williams, *Bloody Tenet of Persecution* (London, 1644)
- Roger Williams, *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, Glenn LaFantasie, ed., (Hanover, 1988)
- Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America* (London, 1643), John J. Teunissen and Evelyn J. Hinz, eds., (Detroit, 1973)
- Roger Williams, *The Letters of Roger Williams, 1632-1682*, John Bartlett, ed., (Providence, 1874)
- Roger Williams, *Mr. Cotton's Letter Lately Printed, Examined, and Answered* (London, 1644) Reuben Guild, ed., (Providence: Narragansett Club Publications, 1866)
- John Wilson, *A Report of the Trial of Mrs. Ann Hutchinson*, in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 349-389.

Edward Winslow, *The Danger of Tolerating Levelers in a Civil State* (London, 1648)

Edward Winslow, *Good News from New England* (London, 1642)

Edward Winslow, *Hypocrisie Unmasked* (London, 1644)

Gerrard Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* (London, 1649)

John Winthrop, *A Modell of Christian Charity* (London, 1630)

John Winthrop, *A Short Story of the Rise, Reign and Ruin of the Antinomians, Familists and Libertines*, in Hall, ed., *Antinomian Controversy*, 199-311.

“Winthrop Papers,” *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, 5th Series, vol. 1

A Word to Fanatics, Puritans and Sectaries or New Preachers, Green the Felt Maker, Spencer the Horse Rubber, Quartermaine the Brewer’s Clerk (London, 1641)

Giles Workman, *Private Men No Pulpit Men, or a Modest Examination of Laymen’s Preaching...in Answer to John Knowls* (London, 1646)

Secondary Sources

Articles, Books, and Dissertations

- Sharon Achinstein, "Imperial Dialectic, Milton and Conquered Peoples,"
in Balachandra Rajan and Elizabeth Sauer, eds., *Milton and the Imperial Vision* (Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1999), 67-89.
- J.H. Adamson and H.F. Folland, *Sir Harry Vane: His Life and Times, 1613-1662*
(Boston: Gambit, 1973)
- Amy Allison, *Roger Williams: Founder of Rhode Island* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2001)
- Richard Archer, *Fissures in the Rock: New England in the Seventeenth Century*
(Hanover: University Press of New England, 2001)
- David Armitage, "The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Languages of Empire,"
The Historical Journal 35 (1992), 531-555.
- David Armitage, "Greater Britain: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?"
American Historical Review 104 (1999), 426-446.
- David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- David Armitage, "John Milton: Poet Against Empire," in David Armitage,
Armand Himy, and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Milton and Republicanism*
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986)
- Louis Franklin Asher, *John Clarke, 1609-1676: Pioneer in American Medicine, Democratic Ideals, and Champion of Religious Liberty* (Pittsburgh: Dorrance Publishers, 1997)
- Maurice Ashley, *Financial and Commercial Policy under the Cromwellian Protectorate* (London, 1934)
- Maurcie Ashley, *John Wildman: Plotter and Postmaster -A Study of the English Republican Movement in the Seventeenth-Century* (London: Cape, 1947)

- Henry Oswald Aspinwall, *The Aspinwall and Aspinwall Families of Lancashire, Ad 1189-1923* (Exeter: William Pollard and Co., 1923)
- Edwin Atwater, *A History of the Colony of New Haven* (New York, 1881)
- James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985)
- G.E. Aylmer, *Rebellion or Revolution? England 1640-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986)
- G.E. Aylmer, "The Religion of Gerrard Winstanley," in Brian Manning, ed., *Politics, Religion and the English Civil War* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973)
- Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955)
- Charles Banks, "Thomas Venner: The Boston Wine-Cooper and Fifth Monarchy Man," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 47 (1893), 437-444.
- Sarah Barber, "'Nothing But the First Chaos:' Making Sense of Ireland," *The Seventeenth Century* 14 (1999), 24-39.
- T.C. Barnard, "Settling and Unsettling Ireland: the Cromwellian and Williamite Revolutions," in Jane Ohlmeyer, ed., *Ireland from Independence to Occupation, 1641-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
- Toby Barnard, *The English Republic, 1649-1660* (London: Longman, 1997)
- John F. Battick, "A New Interpretation of Cromwell's Western Design," *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* 34 (1972)
- Emery Battis, *Saints and Sectaries: Ann Hutchinson and the Antinomian Controversy in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962)
- Hillary McD. Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 1627-1715* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989)
- Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1978)

- Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New York: Routledge, 1975)
- Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America* (New York: Routledge, 1993)
- Robert M. Bliss, *Revolution and Empire: English Politics and the American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990)
- K.S. Bottigheimer, *English Money and Irish Land: The Adventurers in the Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971)
- Jeremy Boulton, "The Poor Among the Rich: Paupers and the Parish in the West End, 1600-1724," in Paul Griffiths and Mark Jenner, eds., *Londonopolis, Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000)
- Russell Bourne, *The Red King's Rebellion: Racial Politics in New England, 1675-1678* (New York: Atheneum, 1990)
- Henry Bowden and James P. Ronda, eds., *John Eliot's Indian Dialogues: A Study in Cultural Interaction* (Westport, 1980)
- Theodore Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004)
- Andrew Bradstock, ed., *Winstanley and the Diggers, 1649-1999* (Portland: Frank Cass, 2000)
- Dwight Brautigam, "Prelates and Politics: Uses of 'Puritan,' 1625-1640," in Laura Lunger Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 49-66.
- Louise Breen, "Religious Radicalism in the Puritan Officer Corps: Heterodoxy, the Artillery Company, and Cultural Integration in Seventeenth-Century Boston," *New England Quarterly* 68 (1995), 3-43.
- Louise Breen, *Transgressing the Bounds: Subversive Enterprises Among the Puritan Elite in Massachusetts, 1630-1692* (London: Oxford University Press, 2001)

- Francis Bremer, *Congregational Communion: Clerical Friendship in the Anglo-American Puritan Community, 1610-1692* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994)
- Francis Bremer, "In Defense of Regicide: John Cotton and the Execution of Charles I," *William and Mary Quarterly* (38) 1980, 105-108.
- Francis Bremer, "A Further Broadening of British History," *Historical Journal* 36 (1993), 205-210.
- Francis Bremer, *John Winthrop: America's Forgotten Founding Father* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)
- Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993)
- Glenn Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996)
- Glenn Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution: An Introduction to English Political Thought, 1603-1642* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992)
- Champlin Burrage, "The Fifth Monarchy Insurrections," *English Historical Review* 25 (1910), 722-47.
- Sargent Bush, "John Wheelwright's Forgotten Apology: The Last Word in the Antinomian Controversy," *New England Quarterly* 64 (1991), 22-45.
- Sargent Bush, "Revising What We Have Done Amiss," *William and Mary Quarterly* 45 (1988), 733-50.
- Richard Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967)
- James Byrd, *The Challenges of Roger Williams: Religious Liberty, Violent Persecution, and the Bible* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2002)
- Elizabeth Macbeath Calder, *The New Haven Colony* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934)
- L. Raymond Camp, *Roger Williams: God's Apostle of Advocacy* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989)

- Nicholas Canny, "The Attempted Anglicization of Ireland in the Seventeenth Century: An Exemplar of British History," in R.G. Asch, ed., *Three Nations: A Common History? England, Scotland, Ireland and British History, 1600-1920* (Bochum: Universitätsverlag N.Brockmeyer, 1993)
- Nicholas Canny, *Kingdom and Colony: Ireland and the Atlantic World, 1560-1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988)
- Nicholas Canny, "What Really Happened in Ireland in 1641?" in Ohlmeyer, ed., *Ireland from Independence to Occupation, 1641-1660*.
- Bernard Capp, *Cromwell's Navy: The Fleet and the English Revolution, 1648-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989)
- Bernard Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972)
- Bernard Capp, "The Political Dimension of Apocalyptic Thought," in C.A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich, eds., *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents and Repercussions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 93-106.
- B.S. Capp, "Thomas Venner," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Seventeenth-Century British Radicals*, 3: 268-270.
- B.S. Capp, "William Aspinwall," in Richard Greaves and Robert Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Seventeenth-Century British Radicals* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), 1: 25-26.
- Norah Carlin, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999)
- Norah Carlin, "The Cromwellian Reconquest of Ireland," in Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield, and Willy Malley, eds., *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict, 1534-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)
- Norah Carlin, "The Levellers and the Conquest of Ireland in 1649," *Historical Journal* 30 (1987), 269-88.
- Norah Carlin, "Leveller Organization in London," *Historical Journal* 27 (1984), 955-960.
- Charles F. Carroll, *The Timber Economy of Puritan New England* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1974)

- James Carroll, *John Perrot: Early Quaker Schismatic* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1971)
- Alfred Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996)
- Kate Chedzoy, "Female Prophecy in the Seventeenth Century," in William Zunder and Suzanne Trill, eds., *Writing and the English Renaissance* (London: Longman, 1996)
- Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust, and Peter Lake, "Revisionism and its Legacies: the Work of Conrad Russell," in Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust, and Peter Lake, eds., *Politics, Religion, and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain: Essays in Honour of Conrad Russell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-20.
- Peter Wilson Coldham, *Emigrants in Chains: A Social History of Forced Emigration to the Americas of Felons, Destitute Children, Political and Religious Non-Conformists, Vagabonds, Beggars and Other Undesirables, 1607-1776* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1992)
- J.C.D. Clark, *English Society, 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology, and Politics During the Ancien Regime, 2nd Edition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- Peter Clark, "The Alehouse and the Alternative Society," in Donald Pennington and Keith Thomas, eds., *Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays in Seventeenth-Century History Presented to Christopher Hill* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 47-72.
- John Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- Thomas Cogswell, "The People's Love: The Duke of Buckingham and Popularity," in Cogswell, Cust, and Lake, eds., *Politics, Religion, and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain*, 211-234.
- Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: MacMillan, 1988)
- Patrick Collinson, "The English Conventicle," *Voluntary Religion: Studies in Church History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986)
- Patrick Collinson, *English Puritanism* (London: Historical Association, 1983)

- Patrick Collinson, *The Puritan Character: Polemics and Polarities in Early Seventeenth-Century English Culture* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1989)
- David Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil War England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004)
- Patrick J. Corish, "The Cromwellian Regime 1650-1660," in T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin, and F.J. Byrne, eds., *A New History of Modern Ireland* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976)
- Barry Coward, *The Cromwellian Protectorate* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002)
- J.M. Cramp, *The History of the Baptist Church*, Chapter 6, Section 9.
http://www.pbministries.org/History/J.%20M.%20Cramp/baptist%20history/baptist_history.htm.
- Patricia Crawford, "The Challenges to Patriarchalism," in John Morrill, ed., *Revolution and Restoration: England in the 1650s* (London: Collins and Brown, 1992)
- Patricia Crawford, "Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood," in Peter Gaunt, ed., *The English Civil War: The Essential Readings* (London: Blackwell, 2000), 303-324
- Richard Cust, "Charles I and Popularity," in Coggeswell, Cust, and Lake, eds., *Politics, Religion, and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain*, 235- 258.
- Barbara Dailey, "Root and Branch: New England Religious Radicals and Their Trans-Atlantic Community, 1600-1660," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Boston University, 1984)
- A.E. Daniel, *London City Churches* (London, 1896)
- J. C. Davis, "Equality in an Unequal Commonwealth: James Harrington's Republicanism and the Meaning of Equality," in Ian Gentles, John Morrill, and Blair Worden, eds., *Soldiers, Writers, and Statesmen of the English Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- J.C. Davis, *Fear, Myth, and History: The Ranters and the Historians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)
- J.C. Davis, "Puritanism and Revolution: Themes, Categories, Methods and Conclusions," *Historical Journal* 34 (1991), 479-490.

- J.C. Davis, "Religion and the Struggle for Religious Liberty in the English Revolution," *Historical Journal* 35 (1992), 507-530.
- J. Colin Davis, "The Levellers and Christianity," in Gaunt, ed., *The English Civil War: The Essential Readings*, 279-303.
- Jack L. Davis, "Roger Williams among the Narragansett Indians," *New England Quarterly* 43 (1970), 593-604.
- Andrew Delbanco, "Looking Homeward, Going Home: The Lure of England for the Founders of New England," *New England Quarterly* 59 (1986), 358-386.
- Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989)
- John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970)
- Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)
- Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies* (London: Cape, 1973)
- Chris Durston, "'Let Ireland be Quiet:' Opposition in England to the Cromwellian Conquest of Ireland," *History Workshop Journal* 21 (1986), 105-111.
- Florence E. Dyer, "Captain Christopher Myngs in the West Indies," *Mariner's Mirror* 18 (1932), 168-172.
- Carolyn A. Eddy, "Reading Popular Political Pamphlets: A Question of Meanings," in Gordon Schochet, ed., with Patricia E. Tatspaugh and Carol Brobeck, *Restoration, Ideology, and Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: The Folger Institute, 1990), 287-306.
- D.C. Eddy, *Roger Williams and the Baptists* (Boston, 1861)
- Everett Emerson, *John Cotton* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990)
- "The English Career of John Clarke," *Baptist Quarterly* 1 (1923), 368-72.
- Robert Thomas Fallon, "Cromwell and the Western Design," in Rajan and Sauer, eds., *Milton and the Imperial Vision*, 133-154.

- J.E. Farnell, "The Navigation Act of 1651, the First Dutch War, and the London Community," *Economic History Review* 16 (1963-1964), 450-452.
- Jospeh Felt, *Annals of Salem*, vol. 2 (Salem, 1849)
- Michael J. Fickes, "'They Could Not Endure That Yoke:' The Captivity of Pequot Women and Children after the War of 1637," *New England Quarterly* 73 (2000), 58-81.
- C.H. Firth, "Henry Vane," Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, eds., *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1917), 118.
- C.H. Firth, *The Last Years of the Protectorate, 1656-1658*, vols. 1-2 (New York: Russell and Russell, 1965)
- David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989)
- W.C. Ford, "Cotton's Moses His Judicials," *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings* 15 (1902)
- Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London: Penguin Books, 1989)
- Stephen Foster, "English Puritanism and the Progress of New England Institutions, 1630-1660," in David D. Hall, John Murrin, and Thad Tate, eds., *Saints and Revolutionaries: Essays on Early American History* (New York: Norton, 1984), 3-38.
- Stephen Foster, "The Godly in Transit: New England and the Challenge of Heresy, 1630-1660: The Puritan Crisis in Trans-Atlantic Perspective," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38 (1981), 624-660.
- Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991)
- Joseph Frank, *The Levellers: A History of the Writings of Three Seventeenth Century Social Democrats: John Lilburne, Richard Overton, William Walwyn* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1955)
- Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell, The Lord Protector* (New York: Dell, 1974)
- Edwin Freshfield, *Some Remarks upon the Book of Records and History of the Parish of Coleman Street, in the City of London* (Westminster: Nicholas and Sons, 1887)

- Allison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999)
- S.R. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649-1656*, vols. 1-4 (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903)
- John Garrett, *Roger Williams: Witness Beyond Christendom, 1603-1683* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1970)
- Edwin Gaustaud, *Baptist Piety: The Last Will and Testimony of Obadiah Holmes* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1994)
- Ian Gentles, "The Agreements of the People and their Historical Context," in Michael Mendle, ed., *The Putney Debates of 1647: The Army, the Levellers and the English State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- C.H. George, "Puritanism as History and Historiography," *Past and Present* 41 (1968), 97-102.
- W. Clark Gilpin, *The Millenarian Piety of Roger Williams* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979)
- Maurice Goldsmith, "Levelling by Sword, Spade and Word: Radical Egalitarianism in the English Revolution," in Colin Jones, Malyn Newitt, and Stephen Roberts, eds., *Politics and People in Revolutionary England: Essays in Honour of Ivan Roots* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 65-80.
- Eliga Gould, "A Virtual Nation: Greater Britain and the Imperial Legacy of the American Revolution," *American Historical Review* 104 (1999), 476-490.
- R.L. Greaves, "Isaac Pennington," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Seventeenth-Century British Radicals*, 3: 21-22.
- Richard Greaves, "John Clarke: A Rhode Island Fifth Monarchist?" *Rhode Island History* 40 (1981)
- Janelle Greenberg, *The Radical Face of the Ancient Constitution: St. Edward's "Laws" in Early Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- Lorenzo Johnston Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620-1776* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942)
- Pauline Gregg, *Freeborn John: A Biography of John Lilburne* (London: Harap, 1961)

- Donald Grinde and Bruce Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty: Native America and the Evolution of Democracy* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991)
- Philip Gura, "The 'Contagion of Corrupt Opinions' in Massachusetts: The Case of William Pynchon," *William and Mary Quarterly* 39 (1982), 469-91.
- Phillip Gura, *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620-1660* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1984)
- Phillip Gura, "The Radical Ideology of Samuel Gorton: New Light on the Relation of English Puritanism," *William and Mary Quarterly* 36 (1979), 78-100.
- John Gurney, "Gerrard Winstanley and the Digger Movement in Waltham and Cobham," *Historical Journal* 37 (1994), 775-802.
- David D. Hall, "Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy on Trial: A Review Essay," *Harvard Theological Review* 95 (2002)
- David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Beliefs in Early New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990)
- Timothy D. Hall, "Assurance, Community, and the Puritan Self in the Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638," in Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents*, 197-209.
- David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- David Harlan, "A People Blinded from Birth: American History According to Sacvan Bercovitch," *Journal of American History* 78 (1991), 949-971.
- Vincent Harlow, *A History of Barbados, 1625-1685* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926)
- Caroline Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983)
- Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990)

- Christopher Hill, "Archbishop Laud and the English Revolution," in Gordon Schochet, ed., with Patricia Tatspaugh and Carol Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War* (Washington, D.C.: The Folger Institute, 1991), 127-150.
- Christopher Hill, *Century of Revolution, 1603-1714* (New York: Norton, 1982)
- Christopher Hill, *Collected Essays* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985)
- Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1993)
- Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat: Milton and Some Contemporaries* (New York: Viking, 1984)
- Christopher Hill, *A Nation of Change and Novelty: Radical Politics, Religion and Literature in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1990)
- Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1958)
- Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1972)
- Derek Hirst, *Authority and Conflict in England, 1603-1658* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986)
- Derek Hirst, *England in Conflict, 1603-1660: Kingdom, Community, Commonwealth* (London: Arnold, 1999)
- Derek Hirst, "The Failure of National Reformation in the 1650s," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 51-62.
- James Holstun, *Ehud's Dagger: Class Struggle in the English Revolution* (London: Verso, 2000)
- James Holstun, *A Rational Millennium: Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth-Century England and America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987)
- Roger Howell, "Cromwell and English Liberty," in R.C. Richardson and G.M. Ridden, eds., *Freedom and the English Revolution: Essays in History and Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986)

- Ann Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998)
- Ronald Hutton, *The British Republic, 1649-1660* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000)
- Stephen Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* (New York: Norton, 1995)
- Sydney James, with Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *John Clarke and his Legacies: Religion and Law in Colonial Rhode Island, 1638-1750* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1999)
- Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (New York: Norton, 1976)
- Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., "Samuel Gorton," *Dictionary of American Biography*, (New York: Scribner, 1972), 7: 438-439
- Margaret Atwood Judson, *The Political Thought of Sir Henry Vane the Younger* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967)
- Ronald Jutte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)
- Stephen Katz, "The Pequot War Reconsidered," in Alden Vaughan, ed., *New England Encounters: Indians and Euroamericans, ca.1600-1850* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999)
- Harry Kelsey, *John Hawkins: Queen Elizabeth's Slave Trader* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003)
- Sean Kelsey, *Inventing a Republic: The Political Culture of the English Commonwealth, 1649-1659* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997)
- Sean Kelsey, "The Trial of Charles I: A New Perspective," *History Today* 49 (1999), 34-41.
- Henry Melville King, *A Summer Visit of Three Rhode Islanders to the Massachusetts Bay in 1651* (Providence, 1896)
- D.A. Kirby, "The Radicals of St. Stephen's, Coleman Street," *The Guildhall Miscellany* (London, 1971)

- Mark Kishlansky, *The Rise of the New Model Army* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979)
- Mark Kishlansky, "What Must Be," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 83-90.
- Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994)
- Laura Lunger Knoppers, "Introduction," in Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 9-26.
- Charles Korr, *Cromwell and the New Model Foreign Policy Toward France, 1649-1658* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975)
- Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "'Errand into the Indies:' Puritan Colonization from Providence Island through the Western Design," *William and Mary Quarterly* 45 (1988), 70-99.
- Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Providence Island, The Other Puritan Colony 1630-1641* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
- Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001)
- Peter Lake, "Defining Puritanism –Again?" in Francis Bremer, ed., *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Faith* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1994)
- William Lamont, "The Left and its Past: Revisiting the 1650s," *History Workshop Journal* 23 (1987)
- William Lamont, *Marginal Prynne* (London: Routledge, 1963)
- William Lamont, "Pamphleteering in the English Revolution," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 179-194.
- William Lamont, "The Religious Origins of the English Civil War," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 1-12.
- William Lamont, *Richard Baxter and the Millennium* (London: Croom Helm, 1979)

- Ned Landsman, "Nation, Migration, and the Province in the First British Empire: Scotland and the Americas, 1600-1800," *American Historical Review* 104 (1999), 463-476.
- J.H. LeFroy, *Memorials of the Discovery and Early Settlement of the Bermudas or Somers Islands, 1511-1687, vol.2* (Bermuda: Bermuda Government Library, 1932)
- W. E. Leveson, "Goffe and Whalley," 5 .9B (v.114) *Cutter Catalogue*, Boston Athenaeum
- Keith Lindley, *Popular Politics and Religion in Civil War London* (London: Scholar Press, 1997)
- Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000)
- Tai Liu, *Puritan London: A Study of Religion and Society in the City Parishes* (Newark: The University of Delaware Press, 1986)
- Christopher Lloyd, *The British Seaman, 1200-1860: A Social Survey* (London: Collins, 1968)
- David Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World: Heresy to Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985)
- Dorothy Ludlow, *Arise and Be Doing: English Preaching Women, 1640-1660* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1978)
- Raymond Lurie, "Some Ideas of Commonwealth in Early Modern England," in Gordon Schochet, ed., with Patricia Tatspaugh and Carol Brobeck, *Reformation, Humanism, and Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: The Folger Institute, 1991), 293-306.
- James F. Maclear, "New England and the Fifth Monarchy: The Quest for the Millennium in Early American Puritanism," *William and Mary Quarterly* 32 (1975), 223-260.
- C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962)

- Michael McGiffert, ed., *God's Plot: Puritan Spirituality in Thomas Shepard's Cambridge* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994)
- Kevin McKenny, "The Seventeenth-Century Land Settlement in Ireland: Towards a Statistical Interpretation," in Ohlmeyer, ed., *Ireland from Independence to Occupation, 1641-1660*.
- John McWilliams, "Indian John and the Northern Tawnies," in Vaughan, ed., *New England Encounters*, 156-178.
- Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992)
- Nancy Klein Maguire, "The 'Tragedy' of Charles I: Distancing and Staging the Execution of a King," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Restoration, Ideology, and Revolution*, 45-66.
- James Peller Malcolm, *Londinium Redivum, Vol. IV* (London, 1807)
- Willy Maley, "Milton and 'the complication of interests' in Early Modern Ireland," in Rajan and Sauer, eds., *Milton and the Imperial Vision*, 155-169.
- Michael Mallet, "The Theory and Practice of Warfare in Machiavelli's Republic," in Gisella Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli, eds., *Machiavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 173-180.
- Brian Manning, *Aristocrats, Plebeians and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (London: Pluto Press, 1996)
- Brian Manning, *The Crisis of the English Revolution, 1649* (Chicago: Bookmarks, 1992)
- Brian Manning, *English People and the English Revolution* (London: Heineman, 1976)
- Joshua Micah Marshall, "A Melancholy People: Anglo-Indian Relations in Early Warwick, Rhode Island, 1642-1675," in Vaughan, ed., *New England Encounters*, 179-195.
- Ruth E. Mayers, "Sir Henry Vane the Younger (1613-1662)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-1005)
- Michael Mendle, *Henry Parker and the English Civil War: The Political Thought of the Public's Privado* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

- Michael Mendle, "Henry Parker: The Public's Privado," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 151-178.
- Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1956)
- Perry Miller, *The New England Mind in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939)
- Perry Miller, *Roger Williams: His Contribution to the American Tradition* (New York: Bobs-Merril, 1953)
- Anthony Milton, "The Creation of Laudianism: a New Approach," in Coggsell, Cust, and Lake, eds., *Politics, Religion, and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain*, 162-184.
- Edmund S. Morgan, *American Freedom, American Slavery* (London: Norton, 1975)
- Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop* (New York: Longman, 1999)
- Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966)
- Edmund S. Morgan, *Roger Williams: The Church and the State* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967)
- John Morrill, "A Liberation Theology? Aspects of Puritanism in the English Revolution," in Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 27-48.
- John Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London: Longman, 1993)
- John Morrill, ed., *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (New York: Longman, 1990)
- John Morrill, "Rhetoric and Action: Charles I, Tyranny, and the English Revolution," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 91-114.
- James Mosely, *John Winthrop's World: History as a Story: The Story as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992)
- J.G. Muddiman, *The King's Journalist 1659-1689: Studies in the Reign of*

Charles II (London: John Lane, 1923)

- L. Mulligan, "William Walwyn," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Seventeenth-Century British Radicals*, 3: 286.
- Andrew R. Murphy, *Conscience and Community: Revisiting Religious Toleration in England and America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001)
- Howard Nenner, "The Trial of Charles I and the Failed Search for a Bounded Monarchy," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Restoration, Ideology, and Revolution*, 1-22.
- Margaret Ellen Newell, *From Dependency to Independence: Economic Revolution in Colonial New England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998)
- David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- Geoffrey Nuttal, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience, Introduction by Peter Lake* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992)
- Michael Leroy Oberg, *Dominion and Civility: English Imperialism and Native America, 1585-1685* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999)
- Sean O'Callaghan, *To Hell or Barbados: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ireland* (Channel Islands: Brandon, 2000)
- Jane Ohlmeyer, "The 'Antrim Plot of 1641': A Rejoinder," *Historical Journal* 37 (1994), 431-438.
- Jane Ohlmeyer, "Seventeenth-Century Ireland and the New British and Atlantic Histories," *American Historical Review* 104 (1999), 446-463.
- James O'Toole, "New England Reactions to the English Civil Wars," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 129 (1975), 3-17.
- Anthony Pagden, "The Impact of the New World Upon the Old," *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 30 (1986), 1-11.

- John Palfrey, *History of New England* (New York: AMS Press, 1966)
- David Parnham, *Sir Henry Vane, Theologian: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Religious and Political Discourse* (London: Associated University Presses, 1997)
- J. Max Patrick, "The Idea of Liberty in the Theological Writings of Sir Henry Vane the Younger," in Leland Carlson, ed., *The Dissenting Tradition: Essays for Leland H. Carlson* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1975)
- Valerie Pearl, "London and Popular Freedom," in Richardson and Ridden, eds., *Freedom and the English Revolution: Essays in History and Literature*.
- Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution: Government and National Politics, 1625-43* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961)
- Carla Gardina Pestana, *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004)
- Carla Gardina Pestana, *Quakers and Baptists in Colonial New England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)
- Steven C.A. Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650-1658* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)
- J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975)
- J.G.A. Pocock, "The New British History in Atlantic Perspective: An Antipodean Commentary," *American Historical Review* 104 (1999), 490-500.
- J.G.A. Pocock, ed., *The Political Works of James Harrington* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977)
- J.G.A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985)
- Kristen Poole, *Radical Reformation from Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2000)
- Charles Henry Pope, *The Pioneers of Massachusetts: A Descriptive List Drawn*

from Records of the Colonies, Towns, and Churches, and other Contemporaneous Documents (Baltimore: Reprinted by the Genealogical Publishing Co., 1965)

Richard Popkin, "Seventeenth Century Millenarianism," in Malcolm Bull, ed., *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1995)

Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994)

John Prendergast, *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* (Dublin: Mellifont Press, 1922)

G.A. Raikes, *The History of the Honorable Artillery Company* (London: Richard Bentley and Sons, 1878)

Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987)

Stephen Robbins, *Manifold Afflictions: The Life and Writings of William Aspinwall* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1988)

Horatio Rogers, *Mary Dyer of Rhode Island: The Quaker Martyr* (Providence, 1896)

P.G. Rogers, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966)

Jesper Rosenmeier, "John Cotton on Usury," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47 (1990), 503-522.

Violet Ann Rowe, *Sir Henry Vane the Younger: A Study in Political and Administrative History* (London: Athlone Press, 1970)

Conrad Russell, *Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)

Conrad Russell, "Why Did Charles I Call the Long Parliament?" in Gaunt, ed., *The English Civil War: The Essential Readings*, 128-139.

Darret B. Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston: A Portrait of a Puritan Town, 1630-1649* (New York: Norton, 1965)

Michael St. Clair, *Millenarianism in Historical Context* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1972)

William Sachse, "The Migration of New Englanders to England, 1640-1662," *American Historical Review* 53 (1948), 251-278.

- David Harris Sacks, *The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic Economy, 1450-1700* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991)
- Margaret Sampson, "'Property' in Seventeenth-Century English Political Thought," in Schochet, ed., with Tatspaugh and Brobeck, *Religion, Resistance, and Civil War*, 259-278.
- Melinde Sanborn, "Angola and Elizabeth: An African Family in the Massachusetts Bay," *New England Quarterly* 72 (1999), 119-129.
- Carol Schneider, "Roots and Branches: From Principled Non-Conformity to the Emergence of Religious Parties," in Bremer, ed., *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Faith*, 167-201.
- Lee Schweninger, *John Winthrop* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990)
- Lois Schwoerer, *No Standing Armies: The Anti-Army Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974)
- Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the English Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988)
- Jonathan Scott, *Commonwealth Principles: Republican Writing of the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- Jonathan Scott, "What were Commonwealth Principles?" *Historical Journal* 47 (2004), 591-613.
- R.B. Seaberg, "The Norman Conquest and the Common Law: The Levellers and the Argument from Continuity," *Historical Journal* 24 (1981), 791-806.
- George Selement, "John Cotton's Hidden Antinomianism: His Sermon on Revelation 4:1-2," *New England Genealogical and Historical Register* 129 (1975), 285-99.
- George Selement and Bruce Wolley, eds., *Thomas Shepard's Confessions* (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1981)

- Ethan Howard Shagan, "Constructing Discord: Ideology, Propaganda, and the English Response to the Irish Rebellion of 1641," *Journal of British Studies* 36 (1997), 4-35.
- Andrew Sharp, "The Levellers and the End of Charles I," in Peacey, ed., *The Regicides and the Execution of Charles I*, 181-202.
- William Simmons, "Cultural Bias in the New England Puritans' Perception of Indians," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38 (1981), 62-70.
- Elizabeth Skerpan, *The Rhetoric of Politics in the English Revolution* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992)
- Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vols. 1-2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978)
- Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Quentin Skinner, "The Republican Ideal of Liberty," in Bock, Skinner, and Viroli, eds., *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, 295-309.
- Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vols. 1-3 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
- Abbot Emerson Smith, *Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607-1776* (Gloucester: P.Smith, 1967)
- J.C. Spalding, "John Goodwin," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Seventeenth-Century British Radicals*, 2: 16-17.
- Keith Sprunger, *Trumpets from the Tower: English Puritan Printing in the Netherlands, 1600-1640* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1994)
- Hugh Spurgin, *Roger Williams and Puritan Radicalism in the English Separatist Tradition* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989)
- John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991)
- Keith Staveland, *Puritan Legacies: Paradise Lost and the New England Tradition, 1630-1890* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987)
- Keith Staveland, "Roger Williams and the Enclosed Gardens of New England," in Bremer, ed., *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Faith*, 257-277

- R.P. Stearns, *The Strenuous Puritan: Hugh Peter, 1598-1660* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1954)
- Deborah Hart Stock, "Thomas Hooker's Journey through English Congregationalism to the New England Way," *International Congregationalist Journal* 3 (2003), 55-76.
- William Stoeber, 'A Faire and Easy Way to Heaven:' *Covenant Theology and Antinomianism in Early Massachusetts* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1978)
- Frank Strong, "The Causes of Cromwell's West Indian Expedition," *American Historical Review* 4 (1899), 228-45.
- Ronald Takaki, "The Tempest in the Wilderness: The Racialization of Savagery," *The Journal of American History* 79 (1992), 904-928.
- Rebecca J. Tannenbaum, *The Healer's Calling: Women and Medicine in Early New England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002)
- Robert Tarule, *The Artisan of Ipswich: Craftsmanship and Community in Colonial New England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004)
- R.K.G. Temple, "Owen Rowe," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Seventeenth-Century British Radicals*, 3: 116-118.
- E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Vintage Books, 1966)
- James Thornley, *The Wards of the City of London* (London: The Architect, 1919)
- Margo Todd, "Anti-Calvinists and the Republican Threat in Early Stuart Cambridge," in Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents*, 85-105.
- Murray Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977)
- Nicholas Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism, 1530-1700* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2001)
- Nicholas Tyacke, *The Fortunes of English Puritanism, 1603-1640* (London: Dr. Williams' Library, 1991)
- David Underdown, *Pride's Purge: Politics in the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971)

- Mark Valeri, "Religious Discipline and the Market: Puritans and the Issue of Usury," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54 (1997), 747-768.
- Alden Vaughan and Daniel Richter, "Crossing the Cultural Divide: Indians and New Englanders, 1605-1763," in Alden Vaughan, ed., *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995)
- Maurizio Viroli, "Machiavelli and the Republican Idea of Politics," in Bock, Skinner, and Viroli, eds., *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, 143-173.
- Albert J. Von Frank, "John Saffin: Slavery and Racism in Colonial Massachusetts," *Early American Literature* 29 (1994)
- Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965)
- Bruce Watson, "The Compter Prisons of London," *London Archeologist* 7 (1993), 115-118.
- C.V. Wedgwood, *A Coffin for King Charles: The Trial and Execution of Charles I* (New York: Macmillan, 1964)
- William Weedon, *Economic and Social History of New England, 1620-1789* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1894)
- Rosemary Weinstein, "London at the Outbreak of the Civil War," in Stephen Porter, ed., *London and the Civil War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 31-33.
- Corinne Weston and Janelle Greenberg, *Subjects and Sovereigns: The Grand Controversy of Legal Sovereignty in Stuart England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991)
- B.R. White, "Hanserd Knollys," in Greaves and Zaller, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Seventeenth-Century British Radicals*, 2: 160.
- B.R. White, *Hanserd Knollys and Radical Dissent in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Dr. Williams' Trust, 1977)
- B.R. White, "John Pendarves, Calvinistic Baptists, and Fifth Monarchists" *Baptist Quarterly* (25) 1973, 225-265.
- B.R. White, "Two Letters from John Clarke to Robert Bennet," *Baptist Quarterly* 27 (1977-78), 142-146.

- William Thomas Whitley, *History of the British Baptists* (London, 1923)
- W.T. Whitley, "The Hubbard-How-More Church," *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, 1910-1911.
- Dorothy Ann Williams, "London Puritanism: The Parish of St. Stephen Coleman Street," *Church Quarterly Review* 160 (1961)
- Neville Williams, *The Sea Dogs: Privateers, Plunder, and Piracy in the Elizabethan Age* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1975)
- Selma Williams, *Kings, Commoners, and Colonists: Puritan Politics in Old and New England* (New York: Atheneum, 1974)
- George Willison, *Saints and Strangers* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1945)
- Charles Wilson, *England's Apprenticeship, 1603-1763* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984)
- Michael Winship, "Contesting Control of Orthodoxy Among the Godly: William Pynchon Re-examined," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54 (1997), 795-806.
- Michael Winship, *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636-1641* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002)
- Austin Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982)
- Austin Woolrych, "The Debates from the Perspective of the Army," in Mendle, ed., *The Putney Debates of 1647*, 53-78.
- Austin Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen: The General Council of the Army and its Debates, 1647-1648* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)
- David Wootton, "Leveller Democracy and the Puritan Revolution," in J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie, eds., *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)
- David Wootton, "The Republican Tradition: From Commonwealth to Common Sense," David Wootton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society, 1649-1776* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 1-45.

- Blair Worden, "Harrington's *Oceana*: Origins and Aftermath, 1651-1660," in Wootton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society, 1649-1776*, 111-139.
- Blair Worden, "James Harrington and the Commonwealth of Oceana, 1656," in Wootton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society, 1649-1776*, 82-110.
- Blair Worden, "John Milton and Oliver Cromwell," in Ian Gentles, John Morrill, and Blair Worden, eds., *Soldiers, Writers, and Statesmen of the English Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 243-264.
- Blair Worden, "Marchamont Nedham and the Beginnings of English Republicanism," in Wootton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society, 1649-1776*, 45-81.
- Blair Worden, "Milton's Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven," in Bock, Skinner, and Viroli, eds., *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, 225-246.
- Blair Worden, "Oliver Cromwell and the Sin of Achan," in Derek Beales and Geoffrey Best, eds., *History, Society and the Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)
- Blair Worden, "Providence and Politics in Cromwellian England," *Past and Present* 109 (1985), 55-99.
- Blair Worden, *The Rump Parliament, 1648-1653* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974)
- Jessie D. Wright, *London's Old Buildings and Where to Find Them* (London, 1937)
- Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992)
- Avihu Zakai, "Puritan Millenarianism and Theocracy in Early Massachusetts," *History of European Ideas* 8 (1987), 309-318.
- Robert Zaller, "The Good Old Cause and the Crisis of 1659," in Schochet, ed., with Tattspagh and Brobeck, *Restoration, Ideology, and Revolution*, 23-44.
- David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000)
- Larzer Ziff, *Puritanism in America* (New York: Viking, 1973)